

Hugo Chávez and the building of his self-image through metaphor

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Abstract

In the last decades metaphor has been much researched from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. One of the metaphor research lines has been the study of metaphor in specialized genres, including politics (Musolff, 2004). Political metaphor has been considerably researched within the cognitive framework and a few investigations have been concerned with the use of metaphor by political leaders (e.g. Semino & Masci, 1996; Charteris-Black, 2004, 2009). The present paper focuses on the use of metaphor in the public discourse of Hugo Chávez, the former Venezuelan president. Chávez was a captivating, if polarizing, leader whose hallmark was his oratory. We analyse a sample of Chávez's speeches for evidence of its metaphorical content. We identify and explain the linguistic and conceptual metaphors that occur in his speeches with a view to demonstrating that they play a central role in the construction of Chávez's self-image as both a political and religious leader for persuasive purposes.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, evaluation, ideology, persuasion.

Resumen

Hugo Chávez y la construcción de su imagen a través de la metáfora

En las últimas décadas la metáfora ha sido objeto de numerosos estudios teóricos y empíricos. Una de las líneas de investigación ha sido el análisis de la metáfora en diversos géneros, incluyendo el político (Musolff, 2004). La metáfora política se ha estudiado desde una perspectiva cognitiva y varios trabajos tratan del uso de la metáfora por parte de diversos líderes políticos (Semino & Masci, 1996; Charteris-Black, 2004, 2009). Este artículo se centra en el uso de la metáfora en los discursos de Hugo Chávez, expresidente de Venezuela. Aunque suscitó división de opiniones, Chávez fue un líder

carismático que destacó por su oratoria. Analizamos un corpus de discursos de Chávez e identificamos y explicamos las metáforas lingüísticas y conceptuales que hemos encontrado. El objetivo es demostrar el papel de las metáforas en la construcción de la imagen de Chávez como líder político y religioso con fines persuasivos.

Palabras clave: metáfora conceptual, evaluación, ideología, persuasión.

Introduction

In the last decades political communication has been studied as a discourse type (cf. Chilton & Schäffner, 2002) with a rhetorical function (e.g. Feldman & De Landtsheer, 1998; De Landtsheer & Feldman, 2000) and an ideological function (e.g. Wodak, 1989; van Dijk, 2006). Much of the research has concentrated on the role of metaphor in the various forms of political discourse, including speeches, party manifestos, committee hearings, news media interviews and articles, and television news. The role of political metaphor has been researched from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and pragmatics. These approaches highlight the cognitive, argumentative, persuasive, evaluative and ideological functions of metaphor. In the present contribution we investigate the occurrence of metaphor in the speeches delivered by the former Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez, and the way metaphors are used in his public discourse. As we shall see, Chávez had a vivid rhetoric and employed metaphor for persuasive purposes to build his self-image as both a political and religious leader and to evaluate policies and political opponents.

This paper is structured in seven sections. The second section gives an overview of the theoretical background of this study. This is followed by a profile of Hugo Chávez as a political leader. After a brief section on Chávez's rhetoric and his use of metaphor, we explain the methodology of our study. Then we focus on the analysis of his metaphorical discourse. The last section presents some concluding remarks.

Theoretical background

Metaphor is profusely used in political discourse, and its role has been vastly investigated. Straehle et al. (1999: 68) identify a range of purposes for metaphor, including persuasion, legitimation, group solidarity and (citing

Chilton, 1996: 74), “the production of new conceptualisations for problematic situations”. Sharifian (2013: 350) stresses the role of political metaphors to establish or legitimize a given perspective.

A close look at the metaphor literature yields the following functions of political metaphor: (1) cognitive; (2) argumentative/ideological; (3) persuasive; and (4) evaluative.

The cognitive role of political metaphor is examined by cognitive theorists (cf. Chilton & Ilyin, 1993; Semino & Masci, 1996; Straehle et al., 1999; Beer & De Landtsheer, 2004). The cognitive dimension subsumes two aspects. First, metaphor in political discourse is a means of conceptualizing and expressing political issues. In line with this, metaphor is a device to construct the political reality (Graber, 1993). Secondly, political metaphors reify abstractions (Katz, 1996; Thompson, 1996). As Mio and Katz (1996: 1) remark, “politics, being an abstract entity, rely heavily on metaphors to make concepts more tangible”.

Nonetheless, political metaphor does not merely contribute to developing a conceptual framework for representing ideas. Chilton and Ilyin (1993: 10) mention the heuristic (i.e. cognitive) and pragmatic roles of political metaphor. In much the same vein, Charteris-Black (2004, 2005, 2009) and Musolff (Musolff, 1998, 2000, 2004; Musolff & Zinken, 2009) put forward a view on metaphor that considers its discursive dimensions. In this light, metaphor is first a mode of argumentation. As Musolff (2004: 39) remarks, “[t]he argumentative exploitation of conceptual metaphors in political discourse is unlimited”. Political metaphors are very effective in the communication and explanation of policy. They frame arguments and suggest particular conclusions. In much the same vein, De Landtsheer (De Landtsheer, 2009; De Landtsheer & Koch, 2005) claims that metaphor is a useful tool for communicating ideology. Ideology is to be understood in the sense suggested by Kress and Hodge (1993: 15): “Ideology involves a systematically organized presentation of reality”. Taking this into consideration, metaphor is essential in creating such a presentation of reality (Charteris-Black, 2004: 28).

Thirdly, metaphor works as a persuasive strategy in political contexts by appealing to the emotions. Last but not least, the ideological motivation of metaphor is based on its rhetorical role as a persuasive technique. Metaphorical choices convey the author’s subtle evaluation of policies or political rivals. For example, Crespo’s (2013) analysis of Churchill’s wartime

speeches reveals dysphemistic metaphor (i.e. pejorative conceptual metaphor) as a powerful resource of manipulation by presenting political rivals negatively.

Charteris-Black (2009: 97-115) has developed a model of metaphor in political communication in which the persuasive modes of myth (i.e. explanatory narratives that embody a set of beliefs expressing aspects of the unconscious) and ideology (i.e. a set of beliefs, attitudes and values through which a group forms and sustains itself) are integrated with the classical role of metaphor outlined by Aristotle, who proposed three functions for metaphors based on *logos* (i.e. communicating and explaining policy), *pathos* (i.e. heightening emotional impact), and *ethos* (i.e. establishing a politician's integrity).

Our analysis is based on Charteris-Black's model, which we deem to be a comprehensive and explanatory account of political metaphor that integrates all the facets discussed above. We seek to gain insight into the ethical dimension of metaphor. More specifically, our aim is to show how metaphor can be effectively employed in two ways (Charteris-Black, 2009: 103): (i) as a form of self-evaluation of a political leader (Chávez in this case), and (ii) as a form of evaluation of policies or political opponents.

Chávez's profile

Hugo Chávez, the former Venezuelan president, was one of the most charismatic and controversial world leaders for 14 years. He enjoyed enormous popular support and garnered international attention. He won the presidency in the 1998 election following a failed coup in February 1992. After surviving a coup against his own presidency in 2002, he won re-election two more times. He died on 5 March 2013 after battling cancer for about two years.

The cornerstone of Chávez's presidency was the Bolivarian Revolution, his plan to remake Venezuela a socialist state, which took its name from Simón Bolívar, a 19th-century Venezuelan independence hero of whom Chávez was a devotee. He even renamed Venezuela the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Bolivarian Revolution was what he called "Venezuela's socialist movement". Chávez's participatory and democratic socialism combined left-wing tenets of equality, social justice and wealth distribution with a fervent nationalism inspired by Bolívar. His foreign policy focused on harsh criticism of the Bush administration and the defence of Latin American economic integration.

Chávez's rhetorical style

Much of Chávez's popularity and charisma is to be attributed to his oratory. Chávez earned a reputation for his lengthy speeches, which captivated huge crowds and grabbed the media attention. They deal with a wide range of topics shifting from capitalism to the proper way to conserve water while showering during the water shortage that Venezuela suffered in 2009. An identical variety is noticed in his multiple appearances on television, where he hosted his own Sunday show, *Aló Presidente* ("Hello President"), mixing theology and serious affairs of state like global politics and the nationalization of businesses with songs, jokes and anecdotes.

As an avid reader, he frequently quoted philosophers (e.g. Kant, Rousseau), thinkers (e.g. Morin, Chomsky, Max, Boff), poets (e.g. Benedetti, Césaire), historical figures (e.g. Bolívar) and even singers (e.g. Silvio Rodríguez, Alí Píera) to legitimize his political projects.

His public speeches and addresses show a vehement style that evoked a sentiment of patriotism and denounced capitalism and imperialism. Nonetheless, the main characteristic of Chávez's discourse was his anti-American perspective, as exemplified by the derisive terms he used to refer to the USA president Bush, such as "asshole" and "Mr Danger" – after an evil character in a Venezuelan novel.

Chávez developed a populist rhetoric in which extensive use is made of metaphors in order to construct his self-image. An example is provided by the source domain of PAINTING. Chávez equates the Bolivarian Revolution with an "unfinished painting" in order to legitimize the abolition of presidential term limits in February 2009. He is the "artist" who cannot not leave his work as it is: "*No se puede pasar el pincel a otra persona en mitad del cuadro. El artista debe terminar su trabajo*" [You cannot hand the brush to someone else in the middle of the painting. The artist must finish his work.]

In the remainder of the paper we shall analyse Chávez's use of metaphor to shape his self-image and to evaluate policies and political rivals.

Methodology and discussion

Methodology

In this paper we carry out a qualitative analysis of the metaphors used by Chávez with a view to showing that they are evaluative tools that serve to

assess policies and political opponents and build up his self-image as a political and religious leader. In the light of this, metaphors can be said to establish Chávez's ethical appeal (cf. above).

The analysis that follows is based on a small-scale corpus research. The data collection has been gathered by means of an Internet search. Of the total corpus of speeches, public statements and election campaigns accessed online, a small sample of 30 that span 10 years were selected for the purposes of this study. The most significant ones were delivered at international forums. They are listed below:

- Speech at the 12th G-15 Summit held in Caracas in February 2004.
- Speech at the United Nations on 16 September 2005.
- Speech at the United Nations on 20 September 2006.
- Speech at the Copenhagen Climate Summit in December 2009.
- Speech at the United Nations on 26 September 2011.

The remaining discourses are speeches delivered in official events, television broadcasts or public addresses to the Venezuelan people _ available at URL: <http://www.revolucionomuerte.org/index.php/discursos/discursos-comandante-hugo-chavez>. This website contains a large archive of Chávez's speeches (over 200), from which we randomly selected a subset of 25 units.

Our search was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, we read the texts in order to find those expressions which we judged to be metaphorical. In the second stage, we classified the linguistic metaphors according to the source domain they are drawn from. The following domains are highlighted: war, religion, travel, family, light and fire. In the third stage we selected the linguistic metaphors that Chávez used to build his self-image.

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, Chávez's public discourse shows characteristic patterns of metaphor use as regards the conceptual source domains underlying his speeches. Table 1 shows the distribution of metaphors across the sample:

Metaphor	Tokens	Metaphorical expressions
WAR metaphors	112	<i>soldados, ejército, enemigo, batalla, guerra, lucha, ofensiva, resistencia, frente, alianza, estrategias, táctica, operaciones de defensa, guerrilla, victoria, empuñar espadas, combatir, defender, resistir, derrotar, vencer</i>
RELIGION metaphors	15	<i>misiones, resurrección, Lázaro colectivo, reino, dogma, diablo, mártir, salvar</i>
JOURNEY metaphors	10	<i>camino, marcha, rumbo, dirección, caminar</i>
FAMILY metaphors	10	<i>padre Bolívar, hijos, hermanos, hermanas, nación hermana</i>
LIGHT metaphors	8	<i>amanecer, alborada, luz, tinieblas, fuerzas oscuras</i>
FIRE metaphors	7	<i>ardimiento, incendio, llamarada, llama, fuego</i>
Other metaphors	2	<i>mar capitalista, tentáculos burgueses</i>

Table 1. Distribution of metaphors across Chávez's discourse.

As can be seen in Table 1, a total of 164 metaphorical expressions were found. An overwhelming majority (112) belongs to the domain of war. There is a low proportion of religious metaphors (15), journey metaphors (10), family metaphors (10), light metaphors (8) and fire metaphors (7). The widest range of linguistic metaphors is found in the domain of war, and the most recurrent metaphorical item is *batalla* ("battle", 23 tokens).

In the remainder of the section, we offer a detailed analysis of all the metaphors.

War metaphors

Chávez employed the conceptual metaphor A POLITICAL PROCESS IS A WAR to build his image as the heir of Simón Bolívar, the Venezuelan independence hero. Thus, his self-proclaimed Bolivarian Revolution echoes Bolívar's wars of independence. Taking into consideration Chávez's admiration for Bolívar and his military roots – Chávez was a military officer – it is hardly surprising that his discourse reveals important correspondences between the domains of politics and war. He saw the Venezuelan people and himself as an army fighting for the Revolution (*el pueblo soldado*):

- (1) Somos soldados del ejército bolivariano, que decidimos hace años entregar nuestras vidas a un proyecto revolucionario.
[We are soldiers of the Bolivarian army, who decided years ago to give our lives to a revolutionary project.]

In commemorating the 21st anniversary of the civil-military rebellion of February 4, 1992, Chávez stated:

- (2) Nosotros salimos a empuñar nuestras espadas en defensa de las garantías sociales, de los derechos de la gran humanidad venezolana, queríamos ser el pueblo en armas forjador de la libertad.
[We left to brandish our swords in defense of social guarantees, of the rights of the greater Venezuelan community. We wanted to return to our Bolivarian essence, to truly be the people in arms forging liberty.]

In the speech he delivered after the 2012 election he advanced his policy for the next years in terms of *alineamientos estratégicos* (“strategic alignments”).

When Chávez uses war metaphors to frame his political project, they carry a positive connotation. Nonetheless, the conceptual elements of the war scenario reveal a different evaluative slant when used to show Chávez’s fierce opposition to Venezuelan political parties and the USA. Thus, the Bolivarian Revolution was first seen as a war against Venezuela’s political parties. Chávez’s political opponents are no longer contenders but enemies (*artillería* “artillery”) supported by foreign governments:

- (3) Los adversarios, los enemigos del país no descansan ni descansarán en la intriga
[The adversaries, the enemies of the country don’t rest, and won’t rest, they’ll continue creating intrigue.]
- (4) Lo que nosotros enfrentamos el 7 de octubre como concreción de la batalla fue una alianza, una coalición de fuerzas internacionales de mucho poder.
[What we faced on 7 October as a sign of the battle was an alliance, a powerful coalition of international forces.]
- (5) Nosotros no derrotamos sólo a Capriles y a la coalición de Capriles, derrotamos a una coalición internacional de mucho poder.
[We defeated not only Capriles and Capriles’ coalition, we defeated a powerful international coalition.]

In the war against his political opponents Chávez uses strategies to win:

- (6) Es necesario continuar fortaleciendo la estrategia, la táctica, las operaciones de defensa.
[It is necessary to continue to strengthen the strategy, the tactics, the defence operations.]

In line with this, he depicted elections as “battles” (*batallas*) and election wins as “victories” (*victorias*):

- (7) ¡Hasta la victoria siempre! Y venceremos.
[Until the victory always! And we will win.]

In 2012 he won a fourth term in office and described his win as a “perfect victory” (*victoria perfecta*) following “a perfect battle” (*una batalla perfecta*).

The Bolivarian Revolution was later represented as a “prolonged fight” (*lucha prolongada*) against capitalism, the USA and its Venezuelan allies. The war metaphors that Chávez used to voice his anti-American attitude evoke a more complex scenario. The war scenario consists of two stages, an observation stage and an action stage. The observation stage begins with the perception of a threat, namely imperialism and capitalism / neoliberalism:

- (8) La guerra imperialista nos amenaza a todos.
[Imperialist war threatens us all.]

The initial threat is a fact when an enemy is identified, namely, the USA:

- (9) El enemigo acecha desde fuera.
[The enemy is lying in wait for us from the outside.]
- (10) Desde el 11 de septiembre de 2001, comenzó una nueva guerra imperialista que no tiene precedentes históricos: una guerra permanente.
[On September 11th 2001, a new and unprecedented imperialist war began, a permanent war.]

Then, in the second stage, there is a call to action where allies are summoned:

- (11) [...] lucha heroica contra el colonialismo.
[heroic fight against colonialism.]
- (12) Fortalezcamos nuestra conciencia y nuestra voluntad de batalla por salvar al mundo.
[We have to strengthen ourselves, our will to do battle in order to save the world.]
- (13) Nosotros sabemos que los pueblos no se suicidan, los pueblos se despiertan, se levantan y combaten.

[But we know that countries do not commit suicide. The people of our countries awake, stand up and fight!]

- (14) Si el capitalismo resiste, le daremos batalla.
[If capitalism resists, we are obliged to take up a battle against capitalism.]

In this context, Chávez refers to the president of Iran, one of Venezuela's main allies against the US, as a "gladiator in the anti-imperialist struggle".

Chávez pleaded for international unity against imperialism in the form of a military front:

- (15) Tenemos que unirnos en un gran frente antiimperialista.
[We must have unity in a great anti-imperialist front.]

The call to action is followed by a military struggle where the countries' unity will allow for victory:

- (16) Si permanecemos unidos podemos vencer al imperialismo.
[As long as we remain united we will be able to defeat imperialism.]

Political struggle is rarely represented in terms of defence:

- (17) El futuro de un mundo multipolar en paz reside en nosotros. En la articulación de los pueblos mayoritarios del planeta para defendernos del nuevo colonialismo.
[The future of a multi-polar world, in peace, resides in us, in the organization of the majority of the people on earth to defend ourselves against the new colonialism.]

Journey metaphors

The heavy presence of journey metaphors in political communication has been highlighted in recent metaphor literature (e.g. Beer & Boynton, 2004: 141; Charteris-Black, 2004: 74). Journey metaphors play a central role in Chávez's self-representation as a political leader. Whereas war metaphors build Chávez's image as the new Simón Bolívar, the metaphor A POLITICAL PROCESS IS A JOURNEY, reveals him as a leader guiding the Venezuelan people toward a new political and economic order. They encode Chávez's political vision of a socialist Venezuela:

- (18) Venezuela comenzó a caminar con sus propios pies.
[Venezuela has started to walk on its own feet.]

In his speech after winning the 15 February 2006 election socialism is the destination reached along the path of revolution:

- (19) Venezuela continuará su marcha hacia el socialismo democrático del siglo XXI.
[Venezuela will continue its march toward the democratic socialism of the 21st century.]

The strength of his discourse lies in terms like “march” and “path”. Thus, in later public addresses Chávez insisted:

- (20) Estos caminos de la construcción del socialismo.
[This path of the construction of socialism.]

The path towards Bolivarian socialism is full of obstacles:

- (21) Ustedes saben cuántas dificultades hemos vencido para llegar aquí hoy. ¡Cuántos caminos hemos cruzado! A veces las fuerzas parecían fallar.
[You know how many difficulties we have overcome to get here today. We have walked across so many paths! Sometimes strength seemed to fail us.]
- (22) La marcha sigue siendo dura, pero con la fuerza irresistible del amor estamos a paso de vencedoras y de vencedores hacia la independencia definitiva, hacia la patria socialista y liberada.
[The march continues to be difficult, but with the irresistible force of love, we are on our way to achieving definitive independence, a socialist and liberated nation.]

In other speeches socialism is the path that leads to the Bolivarian Revolution:

- (23) Lo que nos toca a nosotros ahora es darle la dirección correcta a esta Revolución: el socialismo.
[What remains for us is to give the correct direction to this revolution: socialism.]
- (24) Venezuela tomará el camino socialista.
[Venezuela will take the socialist path.]

Chávez further employed journey metaphors to oppose socialism to capitalism:

- (25) El socialismo, esta es la dirección, este es el camino para salvar al planeta. El capitalismo es el camino al infierno.
[Socialism, this is the direction, this is the path to save the planet. Capitalism is the path to hell.]

Fire metaphors

Fire metaphors support Chávez's self-image as a political leader by showing the Bolivarian Revolution as a fire which burns the country:

- (26) Es un ardimiento la lucha revolucionaria.
[The revolutionary fight is a fire.]
- (27) A los valientes soldados bolivarianos, nos tocó desatar aquel libertario incendio de justicia que durará siglos y siglos.
[To the brave Bolivarian soldiers, it is up to us to enhance that liberating fire of justice that will last century upon century.]
- (28) La Patria ardiendo en llama sagrada, en fuego sagrado.
[The nation burning in a sacred flame, in a sacred fire.]

In Chávez's view, the fire of socialism has spread to Latin America:

- (29) La llamarada se hizo continente.
[The flare-up became a continent.]

Additionally, Chávez resorts to the source concept of fire to refer to the feeling of patriotism, which gave impetus to the civil-military rebellion of 4 February 1992:

- (30) Ese fuego sagrado que nos atizaba por dentro no podía seguir oculto.
[The sacred fire that stirred within could no longer be hidden.]

It is relevant to mention that in the transfer from the domain of fire to the target domain of political revolution the mapped feature is power; in this sense FIRE metaphors are very effective in persuading the audience because of their potential for moving them.

Religion metaphors

The domain of religion plays a central role in Chávez's public discourse. The metaphor POLITICS IS RELIGION backs up Chávez's self-representation. The linguistic realisations of this metaphor are carried out by key words from this domain (*misiones* "missions", *resucitar* "resurrect", *dogma*, *demonio* "devil", *mártir* "martyr") that capture a positive evaluation of Chávez and his political project, on the one hand, and convey a critical stance towards imperialism and the US, on the other hand.

Religion metaphors contribute to Chávez's self-image by emphasizing two dimensions: Chávez-Christ and Chávez the preacher. Chávez borrows two particular aspects of Christ's life in order to mobilize support: his devotion and his saving mission. First, he gives his life to Venezuelan people, just as Christ gave his life for humankind:

(31) *Mi vida es vuestra. Yo pertenezco al pueblo de Venezuela.*
[My life is yours. I belong to the people of Venezuela.]

(32) *Yo no soy Chávez, Chávez es el pueblo.*
[I am not Chávez, Chávez is the people.]

Similar sentiments of dedication are evoked by two further conceptual elements: the religious concept of consecration in (33) and the idea of consumption drawn from the domain of FIRE (34). The former is employed to describe Chávez's commitment to his political project, whereas the latter highlights Chávez's personal sacrifice:

(33) *Me consagro íntegramente al pleno servicio del pueblo venezolano.*
[I remain consecrated completely to continue solving the problems of the people.]

(34) *Me consumiré gustosamente al servicio del pueblo sufriente.*
[I shall gladly *consume* myself with pleasure to help the suffering people.]

Secondly, Chávez's mission, like Christ's, is to save humankind and create a new social order based on moral values:

(35) [...] *y finalmente contribuir a la salvación de la especie humana.*
[and finally contribute to the salvation of the human race.]

(36) *Hagamos de esta tierra un cielo, un cielo de vida y de paz para toda la humanidad.*

[Let us make this earth a heaven, a heaven of life, of peace, peace and brotherhood for all humanity.]

Like Christ the Saviour he brought about Venezuela's resurrection through his landslide victory in 1998:

- (37) Hoy en Venezuela estamos viviendo una verdadera resurrección.
[Today in Venezuela we are living a true resurrection.]
- (38) ¡La Resurrección de Venezuela está en marcha y nada ni nadie podrá detenerla!
[The resurrection of Venezuela has begun and nothing and no one can stop it.]
- (39) Ahí está el 4 de febrero como un grito sagrado que desde nuestra memoria colectiva le dijo a Venezuela levántate y anda, y así ha sido gracias al Lázaro colectivo que es el pueblo de Bolívar, todas y todos somos artífices de la patria resurrecta.
[There is February 4th like a sacred cry from our collective memory that told Venezuela to get up and move forward, and thanks to the collective Lazarus that is the land of Bolívar, all of us are artifices of the resurrected nation.]
- (40) Fue como una resurrección lo que hemos vivido. Aquí había un pueblo dormido como muerto y llegó el Lázaro colectivo y se levantó.
[What we have lived is like a resurrection. There was a dead land and the collective Lazarus came and got up.]

As a preacher, Chávez preaches the virtues of socialism. Chávez equates socialism with Christianity:

- (41) El modelo socialista no es otro que el modelo de Cristo.
[The socialist model is Christ's model.]
- (42) El socialismo, el Reino de Dios en la Tierra, el Reino de la paz, de la justicia y de la igualdad, lo que Cristo vino a anunciar hace más de 2.000 años.
[Socialism, the kingdom of God on earth, the kingdom of peace, justice and equality, what Christ came to announce more than 2000 years ago.]
- (43) Bienaventurados los que sufren porque de ellos será el reino de la justicia, el reino de la paz, del amor, que es el reino del socialismo.
[Blessed those who suffer: for theirs is the kingdom of justice, the kingdom of peace, of love, which is the kingdom of socialism.]

In this context, Christ comes to be considered as the first socialist:

- (44) Si usted realmente quiere ver las cosas a través de los ojos de Jesucristo, que creo que fue el primer socialista.
[If you really want to look at things through the eyes of Jesus Christ, who I think was the first socialist.]

Within the new political order that Chávez meant to establish, his social programs, which constituted the most visible symbols of the Bolivarian Revolution and an important element of his socialist agenda, were metaphorically construed as religious “missions”.

He also showed himself as a preacher when he referred to political leaders that he befriended. Thus, he claimed that Gaddafi, the Libyan president, would be remembered as a “martyr”.

Finally, in contrast with the positive connotation of the conceptual elements above mentioned, Chávez uses his self-image as a preacher to back up a strong negative assessment of the USA policies. The movement promoted by Chávez is strongly opposed to neoliberalism, which is conceptualized as “dogma”:

- (45) Aquí el neoliberalismo alcanzó categoría de dogma doctrinal.
[Here [in Latin America] neoliberalism reached the status of a dogma.]

Chávez fiercely criticized the neoliberal model as a form of “suicide” and promoted the struggle against it. Accordingly, the selection of the word “dogma” carries a negative connotation.

In much the same way, capitalism is denounced as the proof of devil’s action:

- (46) El capitalismo es el camino del diablo.
[Capitalism is the way of the devil.]

Chávez’s “anti-imperialist” policies are also represented by religious metaphors. His anti-American attitude peaked at the United Nations on 26 September 2006 when he pronounced Bush “the devil”. This source concept is exploited by Chávez to develop the political argument that the USA poses a direct threat to the world order and conveys a very strong negative evaluation of American policies. One day after the then-U.S. president spoke to the international body Chávez announced in the General Assembly Chamber:

- (47) Ayer vino el Diablo aquí, ayer estuvo el Diablo aquí, en este mismo lugar. Huele a azufre todavía hoy.
[The devil came here yesterday. Right here. And it smells of sulfur still today.]

The BUSH IS EVIL metaphor is a telling example of the use of metaphor to develop a myth in the sense suggested by Charteris-Black (2009: 100).

Light metaphors

LIGHT metaphors contribute to Chávez's self-image building as Christ and have a strong emotional appeal. Like Christ's kingdom, which came to bring light for mankind, the period that opened with Chávez's election win has brought a new dawn:

- (48) El 4 de febrero nuestro pueblo vio el amanecer de su esperanza.
[On February 4th our people saw the dawn of their hopes.]

The new political order brought about by Chávez is metaphorically understood as a light shining all over the world:

- (49) La luz del pueblo venezolano construyéndose a sí mismo hoy está brillando al mundo. El pueblo venezolano hoy está irradiando sus luces.
[The light of the Venezuelan people building itself is shining today. The Venezuelan people are radiating its light today.]

In much the same way, socialism will bring "dawn" to the South-American subcontinent, as illustrated in (50-51):

- (50) Latinoamérica es un territorio de amanecer.
[Dawn is breaking out all over Latin America.]
- (51) Desde aquí le decimos a Fidel: adelante camarada, que empieza la alborada.
[From here we say to Fidel: Go forward, comrade, dawn is breaking out.]

Whilst the source concept of light has a positive connotation, the polar concept, darkness represents the forces of evil:

- (52) Quienes irrumpimos contra las tinieblas de la injusticia y la indignidad que abrumaban a Venezuela por aquel entonces estábamos, como decía el Che Guevara, guiados por grandes sentimientos de amor.

[Those of us who burst into the shadows of injustice and indignity that overwhelmed Venezuela in those days were, as Che Guevara said, guided by a great feeling of love.]

The negative connotation of darkness is utilized by Chávez for a critical judgment. Chávez associates the enemies of Venezuela to the forces of darkness or “the dark powers”, a familiar expression within Christian discourse to refer to Satan (cf. Charteris-Black, 2005: 51).

Family metaphors

The metaphor A COUNTRY IS A FAMILY appeals to emotion by tapping into Venezuelan nationalism. At the same time it serves an ideological purpose by creating group solidarity in order to win support. Chávez employs this metaphor to back up his self-evaluation as both a political and religious leader. On the one hand, he represents himself as a son of Simón Bolívar, thus following in his footsteps:

- (53) Aquí estamos Padre Bolívar 200 años después mostrándole al mundo antiguo la majestad de la sociedad nueva, una sociedad donde todos podamos vivir como hermanos.
[Here we are, father Bolívar, 200 years later, demonstrating for the new world the majesty of the new society.]
- (54) [...] los soldados que nos sentimos hijos de Simón Bolívar.
[We soldiers consider ourselves the sons of Bolívar.]

Within this conceptual framework, Chávez depicts his foreign allies as siblings. Thus, he called “brother” the Iranian president and Libya a “sister nation”.

On the other hand, Chávez, like Christ, claims that we are all “brothers”:

- (55) Hermanos y hermanas, hoy vivimos en un país realmente libre.
[Brothers and sisters, today we live in a really and truly free country.]
- (56) El pueblo de Estados Unidos [...] son hermanos y hermanas nuestros en toda América y el resto del mundo.
[The people of the United States [...] are brothers and sisters of all of us in the Americas and the rest of the world.]

Figures 1 and 2 summarize the role of metaphor in the construction of Chávez’s self-image as a political and religious leader, respectively.

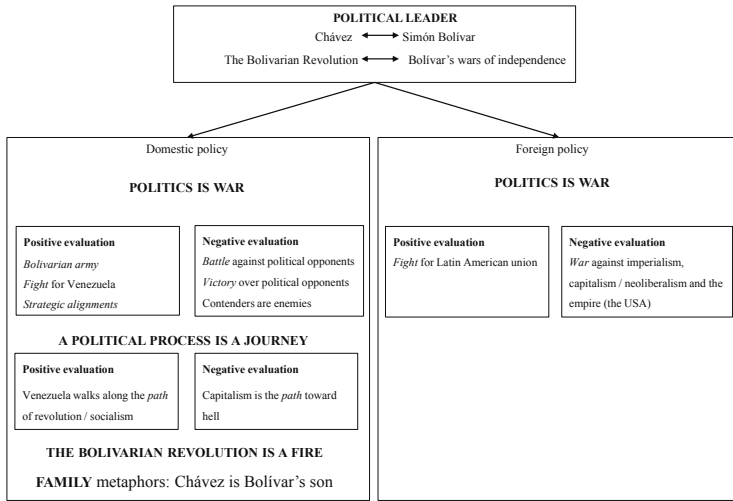


Figure 1. Metaphor in the construction of Chávez's self-image as a political leader.

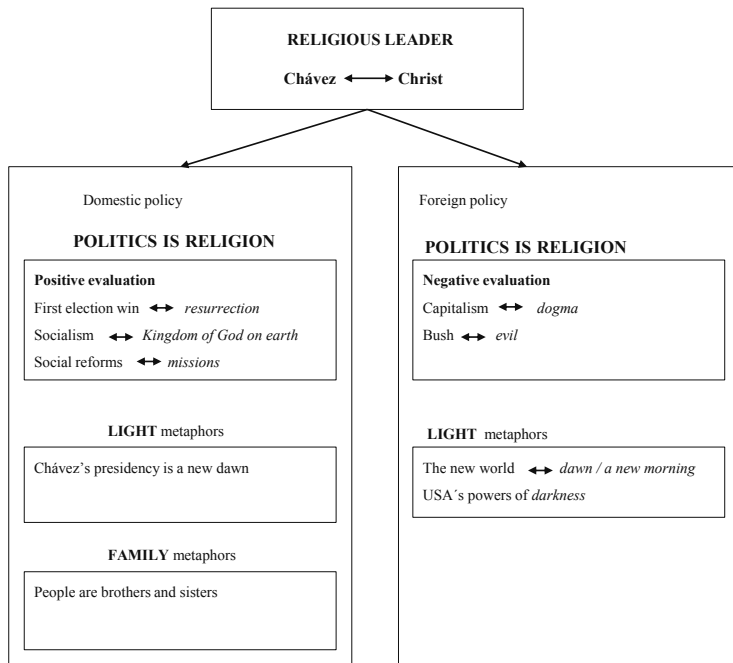


Figure 2. Metaphor in the construction of Chávez's self-image as a religious leader.

In summary, the analysis of Chávez's speeches reveals the ethical dimension of metaphor as both a form of self-evaluation of the politician and a form of evaluation of policies or political opponents. War and religious metaphors are powerful devices for supporting Chávez's ethical integrity as a political and religious leader and for communicating ideology given that they serve to construct his particular representation of the world where the USA is both the enemy and devil. In addition, they are vital in shaping Chávez's stance in his domestic and foreign policies. Most importantly, they are indicative of the changing evaluative bias of metaphor since they carry a positive or negative connotation.

Although we have focused on the ethical dimension of Chávez's metaphoric discourse (i.e. Chávez's self-evaluation and evaluation of political issues), it is worth mentioning that metaphor serves other purposes in his political speeches. Thus, whilst war and religious metaphors prove to be very effective in the communication of his political project, family and light-fire metaphors have a strong emotional appeal.

Conclusion

The present contribution lies within the scope of recent research into political communication, which has revealed that metaphors are not just conceptual devices but have significant rhetorical uses that provide the basis for their discursive function. In this paper we have undertaken an applied study of metaphor in political discourse through the survey of the metaphors occurring in the speeches delivered by the former Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez. As a masterful communicator, Chávez was well-known for his vivid rhetoric condemning capitalism, imperialism and the USA. The study offers evidence for the relevance of metaphor both as a conceptual mechanism underlying political discourse and as an argumentative, ideological, evaluative and persuasive tool. Specifically, the findings show the role of metaphor in building Chávez's positive self-image as the heir of Simón Bolívar and as Christ. In this sense, the paper reveals Chávez's political application of the source domains of war, religion, journey, family and light as powerful persuasive strategies. On the one hand, war and journey metaphors are the basis for his self-portrayal as the leader of the Bolivarian Revolution who fights against his political opponents and American imperialism and leads Venezuela along the path of

revolution/socialism. On the other hand, religion, family and light metaphors support his self-image building as Christ by depicting him as someone who gives his life for his people and saves Venezuelan people, making them members of the same family. Within the light/dark schema, Chávez regarded the new political and economic order that he intended to establish as a “new morning” that would defeat the American “powers of darkness”.

The scope of this paper being limited, further research into the different forms of political communication should be carried out in order to verify the frequency and use of metaphor in political contexts.

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NOTES

¹ A number of conventions are used for reporting metaphors. Source domains are in uppercase letters and conceptual metaphors are in small capitals.

