

Metaphors and Repetition in the First U.S. Inaugural Addresses (1960 ~ 2021)

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The purpose of this study is to show the way in which metaphors in the U.S. first inaugural addresses and repetition are mixed to create rhetorical effects. This study seeks to identify 1) what metaphors and repetition are used in the first inaugural addresses in the 1960s to the 2000s (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990; Lim, 2002) 2) what kinds of repetition are commonly used with metaphors to construct context-induced political reality (e.g., Fairclough, 1993; Potter, 1996; Hart, 2008). Although past studies (Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005, 2014) systematically analyze functions and effects (Boeynaems et al., 2017) of metaphors in presidential speeches via the conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), they do not fully explain the feature of the combination of metaphors and repetition. Thus, there is room for further analysis of this issue in the inaugural addresses and supplementing the lack thereof.

For metaphor identification in the speeches, not just CMT but also the method propounded by Steen et al. (2010) and Charteris-Black (2014) were referenced as the first step; software, ATLAS.ti, was also utilized for the qualitative analysis and code creation. Under the procedure above, metaphors were classified into source and target domains to scrutinize similarities (conventional metaphors) and differences (novel metaphors). Second, the types of repetition were manually identified; finally, examples of the combination were extracted, as in the following John F. Kennedy's remarks: "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." This example shows the mixture of the parallel structure—V and N (verb any noun)—and JOURNEY and FIGHT metaphors. The types of repetition used in the speech are polyptoton, polysyndeton, anaphora, anadiplosis, epanadiplosis, chiasmus, epistrophe, triad, and parallelism. This study mainly focuses on the relationship between metaphors and parallelism due to the frequency of this combination. Overall, the top five source domains used with parallelism in the 12 speeches are JOURNEY, FIGHT, BODY PARTS, BUILDING, and PERSON (personification).

In conclusion, this study proposes the following three noteworthy findings: 1) metaphors tend to be mixed with parallelism to emphasize the theme of each speech; 2) the fusion of metaphors and repetition (parallelism) reflects how the presidents want the audience to perceive them, construction of an ideal presidential image; 3) the fact that social factors can affect the rhetoric lies behind the features given (1) and (2).

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