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## **Conceptual Metaphors in Climate Change Discourse in the Speeches of African Vs. European Political Leaders: A Cognitive Approach**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the conceptual metaphors employed by both African and European political leaders to conceptualize the process of facing climate change and reaching the goal of biodiversity in their speeches during the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference, also known as Conference of the Parties (COP 26) that took place at Glasgow in November 2021. For this end, 20 speeches were selected; 10 representing each of the two continents to identify and analyze the conceptual metaphors employed by political leaders in tackling climate change. The ten European countries are the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, Armenia, the Netherlands, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro. The African countries are represented by Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study adopts Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The results reveal European political leaders' tendency to utilize conflict/ war, doomsday and stock market metaphors. African leaders, on the other hand, had an inclination to employ journey metaphors, building metaphors and human metaphors.

### **key words**

climate change discourse – COP 26 – conceptual metaphor – environmental discourse – political discourse

### **1. Introduction**

Being an important global issue in recent years, environmental concerns, including the climate change challenge has surfaced at the center-stage of political discourse. The world's excessive use of non-renewable energy sources such as fossil fuels and coal have caused an unprecedented rise in the globe's temperature. All countries have witnessed the negative impacts of climate change such as immense floods, huge forest fires, droughts and food insecurities. With the huge world-wide challenges posed by the new climate change and the threats that accompany it, countries committed themselves to a reduction in greenhouse emissions, building resilience to climate change and raising the necessary funds in an attempt to restore ecosystems and reach the goal of biodiversity.

The UN Climate Change Conference is the world's most significant summit on climate change. It brings together political leaders and decision makers from 197 countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Every year, world leaders and specialists present initiatives and exchange ideas and solutions in an attempt to control climate change. At the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference, also known as Conference of the Parties (COP 26), political leaders have presented ambitious plans to control and reduce the rise in global temperature utilizing various linguistic and persuasive devices to draw the public's attention to the global threat posed by climate change. One effective tool is the manipulation of conceptual metaphors, as a significant persuasion tool, from various life domains to convey their messages.

### **1.1 Aim of the Study**

The aim of this research is to identify, compare and contrast the most prominent conceptual metaphors employed by both European and African political leaders in their opening speeches about climate change at the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 26) of the UNFCCC that was held at Glasgow on November 2021. The study depicts how the issue of climate change is metaphorically conceptualized by developing vs. developed countries' political leaders in an attempt to find out the recurrent conceptual metaphors used by political leaders in tackling the climate change issue. The study also investigates the metaphors' cross domain mapping and highlights how these metaphors not only represent their underlying themes, but also reflect the African and European socio-cultural and historical views about nature. In an attempt to investigate these issues, the study poses the following research questions.

1. What are the most recurrent conceptual metaphors utilized by African political leaders at the UN COP (26) in their speeches about climate change?
2. What are the most prominent conceptual metaphors employed by European political leaders at the UN COP (26) in their speeches about climate change?

### **1.2 Significance of the Study**

Although metaphors constitute an important part of political discourse in general and political speeches in specific (Charteris-Black, 2004), limited research has examined how the recent challenges of climate change are metaphorically conceptualized in the speeches of political leaders. Therefore, this study provides insight into an under researched area of study which is environmental discourse in political speeches. In addition, the study highlights how environmental challenges and concerns are viewed differently by developed vs. developing countries in two continents, the thing which sheds light on some of the socio-economic and historical aspects that affect the formulation of conceptual metaphors in tackling the same topic.

## **2. Literature Review**

Conceptual metaphors are not just ornamental tools used in language, but are part and parcel of human thought (Gibbs, 2011). Ungerer and Schmid (2006) claim that metaphors are embedded in human thought and language to the extent that some metaphors became part of everyday lexis. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors reflect one's experience of the world and affect how viewers behave and react. Metaphors are regarded as significant tools of communication, especially when words fail to express meanings. Bourke (2014) states that "Metaphors are particularly useful when people are attempting to convey



experiences most resistant to expression” (p. 447). Gluckberg, Keysar, and McGlone (1992) state that the significance of metaphor does not evolve from the information it provides, but rather the way that information is conveyed.

Casasanto (2009) claims that the human mind conceptualizes abstract ideas through concrete domains. Kövecses (2005) defines metaphor as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain.” (p.3). Goatly (2007) defines metaphor as “thinking of one thing (A) as though it were another thing (B)”, where A is the Topic or TARGET and B is the Vehicle or SOURCE” (p. 11). Establishing similarities between the two domains is called mapping. Therefore, metaphor construction is a process of cross-domain mapping in the cognitive system. It turns abstract and complex issues into concrete and tangible ones through linking the target domain to the source domain.

## **2.1 Metaphors in Political Discourse**

Political speeches play a significant role in leading the public’s opinions and actions regarding several issues (De Rycker & Don, 2013). They rely heavily on metaphors to persuade the audience of views and decisions. The significant role of metaphor in political discourse has been examined by several scholars (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2004; Chilton, 2004; Goatly, 2007; Musolff, 2004). Studies show that utilizing metaphors in political discourse has a strong impact on swaying the audience’s views regarding several issues (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011). Charteris-Black (2004) highlights that metaphors are employed in political discourse in general and political speeches in specific to serve several purposes such as allowing the audience to grasp meanings, arousing the audiences’ emotions in an attempt to persuade them of political views and enhancing the Charisma of the speaker.

Several studies examine the conceptual metaphors employed by political leaders in their speeches. However, studies reveal that some conceptual metaphors are more common in political discourse than others. Charteris-Black (2004) demonstrates that war and sports metaphors are among the most commonly used conceptual metaphors in political discourse. In a study of political discourse in the USA, Howe (1988) states that the most common metaphors originate from the domains of sports and war and concludes that this shows politics as a contest or an exercise of power. Daughton (1993) analyzes ‘holy war’ metaphors in Roosevelt’s 1933 inaugural speech. He concludes that the conceptual metaphor was effectively used to review shared values among the audience and unify them.

Figar (2013) applies the Conceptual Metaphor Theory to investigate the use of conflict and sports metaphors in political discourse in daily newspapers such as and concludes that these conceptual metaphors arouse the emotions of readers. Other prominent metaphors employed in political discourse are game, sports and journey metaphors (Chilton, 2004; Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff and Johnson, 2004)

## **2.2 Conceptual Metaphors in Climate Change discourse**

Even though climate change is currently a global pressing issue, there is not adequate research about political leaders’ metaphorical choices when it comes to tackling the environmental issue of climate change. Little research has focused on political leaders’

choices of conceptual metaphors when presenting climate change, an issue which has recently come to the forefront of the world's political agenda. Therefore, this study fills in the gap in the present literature.

Scholars who investigated the use of conceptual metaphors when talking about climate change, basically focused on media discourse. Studies show that western media's use of metaphors when tackling climate change reveal the prevalence of war metaphors to convey the urgency of facing it (Asplund, 2010; Cohen, 2011). Atanasova and Koteyko (2017) apply critical metaphor analysis to examine the use of conceptual metaphors in portraying climate change in the editorials/ opinion-page content of two key British online newspapers; the Guardian online and the Mail online. They conclude that in the Guardian metaphors were mainly taken from the war domain to imply the urgency of a swift action to address the problem, while in the Mail metaphors relied heavily on the domain of religion.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Data**

The data selected for this study are twenty speeches given by keynote African and European political leaders at the opening sessions of the UN Climate Change Summit, also known as Conference of the Parties (COP 26), held at Glasgow from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October to the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. The speeches are taken from the United Nations for Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) official website <https://unfccc.int/>. On the one hand, ten speeches are given by Presidents or Prime Ministers of African countries and those are: Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe. On the other hand, ten speeches are given by European Presidents or Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, Armenia, the Netherlands, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro. The speeches selected were all given in the English Language. The Study examines African and European speeches for various reasons. First, European countries are mostly industrialized developed countries that are among the highest emitters of carbon dioxide while African countries are mostly rural developing countries that are attached to their nature, but which really suffer from lack of resources to face climate change consequences.

#### **3.2 Procedure**

This research applies a qualitative approach to identify and interpret the conceptual metaphors employed by African and European political leaders during their speeches about climate change which is a currently pressing global issue. The study draws upon Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In order to identify the conceptual metaphors employed, source and target domains are detected through the lexical expressions that map source domains through target domains.

### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.3.1 Cognitive Theory of Metaphor (CTM)**

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor as grasping one meaning with reference to another. Their cognitive theory of metaphor is based on the concept that the human cognitive system is mainly metaphorical, which means that metaphor is not only a stylistic, ornamental tool used in poetry, but a vital component in people's cognition (Deignan, 2005). Being an inherent part of thought, metaphors are used in everyday discourse to convey one meaning through another and to assist in grasping abstract concepts through concrete ones. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, language, thought and action. The human ordinary conceptual system, in terms of thinking and acting, is basically metaphorical in nature" (P.3).

As the human cognitive system is basically metaphorical, metaphorical concepts are understood according to one's experiences of the world (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). Therefore, conceptual metaphors are also related to one's culture and they reflect cultural views. They also shed light on their users "deeply embedded beliefs" (Quinonez, 2018, p. 24). Therefore, conceptual metaphors are shared by people who share the same knowledge and belief. Deignan (2005) states that "the frequent metaphors of a community must contribute to a collective bias in understanding the world, because they both hide and highlight aspects of reality from members of that community" (p. 24). Although some conceptual metaphors are international as they are understood by several cultures such as "Affection is warmth", others are specific to certain cultures as in "life is a circle" which is a metaphor that is understood by Buddhists as they share the belief that death is not an end, but a stage in the continuous cycle of life.

### 3.3.2 Metaphorical Mapping

A metaphor occurs when a set of similarities take place across two different domains, known as the source domain and the target domain. Metaphors are structured through mapping experiences from the source domain into the target domain. Lakoff (1993) states "In short, the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another" (p. 203). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provide the example life is a journey" to demonstrate how an abstract concept like (life), which is a target domain, is mapped through a more concrete concept (journey) which is the source domain. A journey, just like life has a beginning and an end and obstacles in between. Once a conceptual metaphor is formed, it allows for other metaphors to be conceptualized. In the "life is a journey" metaphor, for instance, people can be passengers, reaching a goal is reaching a destination, decisions can be crossroads, challenges can be obstacles and important events as mile markers.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) categorize conceptual metaphors into three groups: Structural, orientational and ontological metaphors. First, structural metaphors are the most commonly used in everyday speech as in TIME IS MONEY so "*time is precious*", one can "*invest time*" or "*should not waste time*". Second, orientational metaphors rely on spatial concepts, like up is more and down is less as in HAVING CONTROL IS UP. Finally, ontological metaphors are a way of viewing emotions and activities as substances, objects and containers as in THE MIND IS A MACHINE.

## 4. Data Analysis

In this section, identification and analysis of the conceptual metaphors employed by European and African political leaders at the COP (26) while tackling climate change are presented. First, European political leaders demonstrate a tendency to use metaphors from different domains. Three main patterns of conceptualizing climate change were identified in their speeches. They show a tendency to use conceptual metaphors such as CLIMATE CHANGE IS CONFLICT/ WAR, CLIMATE CHANGE IS DOOMSDAY and CLIMATE CHANGE IS A STOCK MARKET. African political leaders, on the other hand, employ different conceptual metaphors as FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A JOURNEY, FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUILDING PROJECT and NATURE IS HUMAN.

#### 4.1 Conceptual Metaphors in European Political Leaders' Speeches

First, European political leaders excessively employ war metaphors in their climate change discourse. As shown in table (1), facing climate change is extensively compared to being at war or as being a battle for survival. It is described using a cluster of metaphors that include military expressions from the source domain of war. Climate change is conceptualized as an enemy that united humanity need to “combat”. These metaphors are stated in “*Combatting climate change is one of our weightiest human responsibilities*”, “*The Kingdom of the Netherlands has been battling the elements for centuries*”, “*We will fight climate change with nature-based solutions*”, “*...to combat desertification*”, “*begin the fightback against climate change*”, “*There is no silver bullet against climate change*” and “*to defuse that bomb*”.

Developing countries fighting climate change are also conceptualized by European countries as an army in short of supplies and in need of funding as in “*for the most vulnerable communities, adaptation funds are often in short supply*” and “*we jeopardize the food supply for hundreds of millions of people*”. It is a global battle with no boundaries as in “*The impact of climate change has no national borders*”. It is a battle that is conceptualized as a threat that science has warned against as in “*science has been sounding the alarm bell*”.

Then, there is a call for immediate action as in “*There is no time to lose! The time for action is now!*”, “*we have to take action. Timely, firm and concerted action*”. There is also a motto for the battle/ campaign against climate change as in “*climate resilience must be our motto, climate adaptation our common endeavor*”. There is also a call for allies to assist in this battle against the enemy as in “*Let's join our forces in protecting the environment*”, “*in our joint efforts to fight climate change*” and “*joining global efforts to combat climate change*” and talking about the catastrophic results that would affect humanity in case of losing the battle as in “*Climate change can tear us apart*”, “*if we lose the arctic, we lose the globe*” and “*if we fail they will not forgive us. They will know that Glasgow was the historic turning point when history failed to turn*”.

Facing climate change is also conceptualized as a noble battle for protecting humanity that includes sacrifices as in “*let us do enough to save our planet and our way of life*”, “*The protection of our climate and our planet is one of our generation's most important challenges*” and talking about the army's mission “*to protect our climate*” and “*The EU has proven that this can be accomplished without sacrificing economic growth*”.

#### Table (1): CLIMATE CHANGE IS CONFLICT/ WAR

CLIMATE CHANGE IS CONFLICT/ WAR		
<p><b>Combating</b> climate change is one of our weightiest human responsibilities.</p> <p>if we <b>lose</b> the arctic, we <b>lose</b> the globe</p> <p>So climate resilience must be our <b>motto</b>, climate adaptation our common <b>endeavour</b>.</p> <p>The Kingdom of the Netherlands has been <b>battling</b> the elements for centuries.</p> <p>There is no <b>silver bullet against</b> climate change.</p> <p>We will <b>fight</b> climate change with nature-based solutions.</p> <p>....to <b>combat</b> desertification.</p> <p>There is no time to <b>lose</b>! The time for <b>action</b> is now!</p> <p>The impact of climate change has no <b>national borders</b>.</p> <p>Let's <b>join</b> our <b>forces</b> in <b>protecting</b> the environment.</p>	<p>begin the <b>fightback</b> against climate change.</p> <p>joining global efforts to <b>combat</b> climate change.</p> <p>But for the most <b>vulnerable</b> communities, adaptation funds are often in <b>short supply</b>.</p> <p>we have to take <b>action</b>. Timely, firm and concerted <b>action</b>.</p> <p>.... a <b>global crisis</b></p> <p>science has been <b>sounding the alarm bell</b>.</p> <p>to <b>protect</b> our climate.</p> <p>Our world is still in a state of <b>emergency</b>.</p> <p>our <b>fight</b> against climate change</p> <p>the task now is to <b>work together</b> to help our friends to decarbonize</p>	<p>The <b>protection</b> of our climate and our planet is one of our generation's most important <b>challenges</b>.</p> <p>we <b>jeopardize</b> the <b>food supply</b> for hundreds of millions of people.</p> <p>Climate change can <b>tear us apart</b>.</p> <p>if we <b>fail</b> they will not forgive us. They will know that Glasgow was the historic <b>turning point</b> when history <b>failed</b> to turn</p> <p>let us do enough to <b>save</b> our planet and our way of life</p> <p>to <b>defuse</b> that <b>bomb</b></p> <p>..... in our <b>joint efforts</b> to <b>fight</b> climate change.</p> <p>The EU has proven that this can be accomplished without <b>sacrificing</b> economic growth.</p>

Aside from war metaphors, European political leaders also employ the conceptual metaphor CLIMATE CHANGE IS DOOMSDAY. As shown in table (2), they conceptualize climate change as a “doomsday device” or “doomsday clock” that is ticking and that will eventually put an end to human life on Earth. Climate change is compared to a “red digital clock” that is counting down to a detonation and needs to be deactivated. This doomsday clock is working through the use of non-renewable energy sources as it is “ticking through the billions of pistons, turbines, furnaces and engines”. Therefore, all efforts exerted to face climate change are compared to building a lifeboat to save humanity.

**Table (2): CLIMATE CHANGE IS DOOMSDAY**

CLIMATE CHANGE IS DOOMSDAY		
<p>we have brought you to the very place where <i>the doomsday device</i> began to <i>tick</i>.</p> <p>It's one minute to midnight on that <i>doomsday clock</i> and we need to <i>act</i> now.</p> <p>We have the technology to <i>deactivate</i> that <i>ticking doomsday device</i>.</p>	<p>while a <i>red digital clock ticks down</i> remorselessly to a <i>detonation</i> that will end human life as we know it</p> <p>.... the <i>clock is ticking</i> to the furious rhythm of hundreds of billions of pistons and turbines and furnaces and engines</p>	<p>the world has slowly and with great effort and pain, built a <i>lifeboat</i> for <i>humanity</i>.</p> <p>humanity has long since run down <i>the clock</i> on climate change.</p>

As shown in table (3), CLIMATE CHANGE IS STOCK MARKET is another conceptual metaphor employed by European political leaders at the COP (26). Climate change is conceptualized as a stock market where countries have “shares” or stocks of renewable energy sources. If countries do not expand their shares of clean energy sources they run a risk with a high “price”. Therefore, “a set of measures” are to be taken to reach the goal of biodiversity.

**Table (3): CLIMATE CHANGE IS STOCK MARKET**

CLIMATE CHANGE IS STOCK MARKET		
<p>Romania has a solid <i>share</i> of renewable energy</p> <p>the longer we fail to act the worse it gets and the higher the <i>price</i> when we are eventually forced by catastrophe to act.</p>	<p>A set of interconnected <i>measures</i> can help us deliver.</p> <p>We are committed to expand this <i>share</i>.</p>	<p>the impact of climate change is already all too evident. Its <i>price</i> is also rising fast – especially for poorer nations.</p>

#### 4.2 Conceptual Metaphors in African Political Leaders’ Speeches

Conceptual Metaphors in African Political Leaders’ Speeches are FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A JOURNEY, FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUILDING PROJECT and NATURE IS HUMAN. In the first metaphor, countries are conceptualized as travelers who move forward on a “*path*” to meet their climate change “*targets*” or destinations. This path is “*a sustainable course*”, therefore it involves numerous “*steps*” that countries should take and are all related to the sustainable development goals to reach their destination. Actually, countries or in this case travelers are conceptualized as having to follow a “*roadmap*” to reach their destination. Along the “*pathway*” there are “*debts*”, “*burdens*” and obstacles that they need to overcome. This journey along with its goal are conceptualized as being pivotal as they determine the globe’s “*destiny*”. It is also a journey where countries are moving forward and where no one is left behind. Therefore, African countries stress their need of the promised funds provided by their journey partners, who are developed countries, to be able to move forward along the journey. The journey is conceptualized as a noble one as it determines the future of Mankind.

**Table (4): FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A JOURNEY**

CLIMATE CHANGE IS JOURNEY		
<p>We urge strong U.S. leadership and commitment in placing the world <i>on a path</i> to meeting our climate change <i>targets</i>.</p> <p>Developed countries must translate the principle of <i>leaving no one behind</i> into action.</p> <p>Namibia is taking transformative <i>steps</i> towards honoring this responsibility.</p> <p>This critical <i>step</i> would provide the bedrock of an international carbon market mechanism.</p> <p>This is the single most important <i>step</i> to keeping the Paris Agreement’s 1.5C target alive.</p> <p>The estimated investment required to <i>achieve</i> this <i>target</i> is approximately USD 5.3</p>	<p>fully address the three <i>goals</i> of the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>Together, we can make a difference as a shared community of global citizens with a common <i>destiny</i>.</p> <p>to <i>mobilize</i> large scale private investment for climate action.</p> <p>we call for the \$100 billion target for climate finance needs to be surpassed as a <i>target</i>, with a clear <i>roadmap</i> on how the committed amounts will be delivered.</p> <p>to make it possible for emerging economies carrying high <i>debt</i></p>	<p>...hopefully put back our planet on a sustainable <i>course</i>.</p> <p>These actions will <i>pave the way</i> for Mauritius to become a climate resilient and low emission country.</p> <p>we expect our <i>partners</i> to do their share.</p> <p>Nigeria has developed a detailed energy transition plan and <i>roadmap</i> based on data and evidence</p> <p>...transitioning our economy <i>across</i> sectors and the data.</p> <p>climate resilient development <i>pathway</i> in nigeria</p>

billion. .	<i>burdens</i> to kickstart transformative projects.	We are taking these bold <i>steps</i> to enhance our energy security
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Second, political figures from African countries use metaphors from the domains of architecture and construction to conceptualize facing climate change as a building project. Climate financing is compared to an “*architecture*” that is faulty due to lack of funds, a point which comes at the center stage of nearly all African political leaders’ speeches. They talk of “*building a more resilient economy*” that would help them with reaching their goals. This economy is the “*cornerstone*” of their green projects.

**Table (5): FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUILDING PROJECT**

FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUILDING PROJECT		
We are all aware that there is an inherent imbalance in the current <i>architecture</i> of climate financing.	The green and blue economy, including a green hydrogen industry, are <i>cornerstones</i> of the Second (HPP-II) launched in March this year.	... <i>build</i> a more resilient economy.

NATURE IS HUMAN is another conceptual metaphor employed by African leaders in their speeches at the COP (26). Nature is compared to humans or human body parts. For instance, climate change can cause the “death” of world oceans. Lake Chad, in Africa, is turning into a shadow of itself as it has suffered from desertification and Chad forests are a major part of the world’s lungs which helps Mankind to breathe. These metaphors shed light on how the African culture reveres nature in general. For Africans, nature is a source of life.

**Table (6): NATURE IS HUMAN**

NATURE IS HUMAN		
to protect us all from the impacts from runaway climate change, breakdown of the biosphere and <i>the death</i> of the world’s oceans.	lake chad has gone from a vast expanse of biodiversity to a <i>shadow</i> of itself	We are a major part of the global <i>lungs</i> which make it possible for the industrial world to breathe.  In order to guarantee the wellness of these global <i>lungs</i> .



## 5. Discussion

Common conceptual metaphors in European political leaders' speeches about climate change such as CLIMATE CHANGE IS CONFLICT/ WAR/ and CLIMATE CHANGE IS DOOMSDAY are employed to give weight and significance to the issue of climate change. They show the listeners that climate change is not a trivial matter that the world can turn a blind eye to, but a matter of survival; a matter of life and death. Therefore, taking an action against climate change is conceptualized as grave as going to war. Employing war and doomsday metaphors also demonstrate a sense of urgency to take action regarding climate change. It stresses on the significance of time as a factor in winning this battle. War and doomsday metaphors are also used to unify their audience. At war, a nation has a common goal that is shared by all its members. Therefore, war metaphors evoke emotions of patriotism and solidarity. Conceptualizing facing climate change as a battle demonstrates that it is a global battle against climate change that unifies humanity. It makes it more of a shared goal that can only be achieved through solidarity. Moreover, it insinuates the excessive amount of struggle and sacrifice needed to achieve this goal.

The conceptual metaphor CLIMATE CHANGE IS STOCK MARKET is also employed to highlight that climate change involves a lot of risks for mankind. Thus, in case of disregarding the new environmental goal of reducing the globe's temperature 1.5 degrees Celsius, the price would be extremely high for all countries as they would risk losing not just their resources, but also their home Earth. It demonstrates that all countries need to invest their future in clean energy sources such as renewable energy. It highlights that countries have a shared duty towards the climate change crisis as they all have stocks and shares in it and therefore they all have a shared responsibility to act in accordance with the UNFCCC guidelines and agreements.

On the other hand, African political leaders employ other conceptual metaphors in their speeches at the COP (26). They employed conceptual metaphors such as FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A JOURNEY, FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUILDING PROJECT and NATURE IS HUMAN. Journey metaphors are used by African political leaders to demonstrate that reaching their goal which is the gradual transition from using coal and fossil fuels to the use of renewable and clean energy sources is like going through a long journey for reaching a desired destination. It highlights that reaching this destination is not easy and would take a long time and effort as the journey is full of obstacles and burdens. Being developing countries, African countries need help with funding to be able to implement the new environmentally-friendly technologies. Therefore, journey metaphors are employed to highlight the significance of patience as new environmental measures would take time to implement and developed countries need to provide the necessary funds to be able to reach their common destination. Moreover, journey metaphors are also used to insinuate the great value of the goal of biodiversity. Charteris-Black (2004) states that "Journey metaphors have a strong positive orientation: even when negative aspects of journeys are highlighted by the metaphor – such as burdens to bear – the effort that is necessary to achieve anything is evaluated as worthwhile." (p. 93). Journey metaphors are also used to invite listeners to join the speakers in their endeavors. Thus, African countries stress their need of developed countries to help with the funding to implement new environmentally-friendly technologies.

Facing climate change is also conceptualized as a building process to express a positive appraisal of the action taken as the end result is extremely valuable. Just like journey metaphors, building metaphors are also positively appreciated as they involve tremendous efforts of getting through numerous stages that extend through a long period of time, but end up with a valuable outcome. They also stress patience as an important factor in reaching a goal. Building metaphors are also used to imply the importance of cooperation as buildings are not built individually, but need the cooperation of a number of people or entities. Building also involves labour and materials that are expensive, thus, African leaders use both points to stress on the important role played by developed countries in reaching their aspired goal through providing them with the necessary funds. Charteris-Black (2004) highlights that “building and travelling are conceptually related, as they are both activities in which progress takes place in stages towards a predetermined goal. In both cases [...] achieving goals is inherently good, they imply a positive evaluation of political policy” (p.95).

In African leaders’ speeches, nature is also conceptualized as human and vital body parts. Thus forests are compared to lungs and oceans and lakes to human beings who can die if climate change is not faced which highlights not only the significance of the topic for the African countries as they suffer from forest fires, draughts and food insecurities, but also the African culture’s attachment to nature as it is viewed as their roots and source of life.

## 6. Conclusion

This study identifies and examines the use of conceptual metaphors in climate change discourse in the speeches of European and African world leaders at the 26<sup>th</sup> UNFCCC, also known as COP (26) in 2021. Twenty speeches by ten European leaders and ten African leaders at the opening sessions of the COP (26) are examined. The European countries are represented by the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, Armenia, the Netherlands, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro. The African countries comprise Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study applies Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) cognitive theory of metaphor to investigate the use of conceptual metaphors in climate change discourse by European and African politicians.

On the one hand, the findings show European countries’ tendency to use metaphors from the source domain of war, conflict, doomsday and stock market. Conceptual metaphors such as CLIMATE CHANGE IS CONFLICT/ WAR, CLIMATE CHANGE IS DOOMSDAY and CLIMATE CHANGE IS STOCK MARKET are common in their speeches. Conflict, war and doomsday metaphors are employed to show the gravity of the topic, to stress the urgency of taking action, to evoke feelings of unity and solidarity. CLIMATE CHANGE IS STOCK MARKET is also used to highlight the idea that climate change involves many risks and that it is a shared responsibility.

On the other hand, the findings show African countries’ tendency to use metaphors from the source domain of journeys, architecture and humans. Conceptual metaphors such as FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A JOURNEY, FACING CLIMATE CHANGE IS A BUILDING PROCESS and NATURE IS HUMAN are present in their speeches. Journey and building metaphors are employed to show the amount of hard work needed to achieve the goal of biodiversity as it involves time, numerous stages and a lot of hard work. They are also employed to show that African countries need assistance especially with the necessary funds to make a smooth transition to environmentally-friendly technologies. Nature is also conceptualized as human to show nature’s value for Africans.

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