A Corpus-Based Approach to Critical-Cognitive Analysis of Political Metaphors: Developing a Theoretical Framework

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The interdisciplinary critical-cognitive investigation of metaphor in political and media discourse has come to the attention of linguistics in recent years. This article aims to pursue the line of research in constructing a corpus-based theoretical framework in this field using conceptual blending theory (BT). The framework is applied in a CDA of metaphors for the concept of UNITY in a selected corpus of Iranian newspaper editorials. The identified metaphorical usages of the unity concept in the concrete discourse are classified according their meaning categories. Using the conceptual blending theory (BT) for qualitative analysis of the study, the most frequent meaning categories are projected into conceptual blending networks. Using the mathematical set theory, each of the emergent structures of these networks is supposed as a mathematical set and the elements within them are regarded as members of the set.

Based on the commonality principle of set theory, those members which are common between two or more sets show the relative entrenchment of the corresponding elements in emergent structures. These entrenched elements form the abstract discourse which is the subject to do critical discourse analysis. It is concluded that by using the mathematical set theory, it is possible to prove the relative entrenchment of the concepts in the corpus. Therefore, the theoretical framework proposed by this paper seems to have the potential to be utilized as a formulated framework in corpus-based critical studies of metaphor.