

Faces and Phases of Leadership: A Metaphoric Interpretation of Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch*

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Abstract

This paper explores the deployment of conceptual metaphors in the memoir of former president Olusegun Obasanjo, examining how metaphorical affordances shape expressions and their purported meanings. Through a discourse analysis of the memoir, *My Watch*, the research shows how metaphors drawn from the second volume of the memoir create vivid description of the faces and phases of leadership through the author's lens. The study relies on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The paper discusses the faces and phases of leadership in volume two of former president Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch* and explores the concepts of leadership. Seventeen excerpts are purposively selected and analysed based on their relevance to the discourse. Findings reveal that metaphors uncover servitude, reformation, fight, bliss, constant learning, healing and accomplishment inherent in leadership. All these show that the phases and faces of leadership are laced with changing conditions, internal demands, and outside influences. This study, therefore, posits that metaphors are engaged to show inherent semantics, and convey other messages to the reader. The findings of the research point to the role of the metaphors to better comprehend political memoirs and more importantly the intricacies of leadership.

Keywords: Olusegun Obasanjo, Conceptual Metaphor, Leadership, Memoir, *My Watch*

Introduction

Metaphor is a cognitive device which constitutes ideology. It can function effectively as a part of a discriminatory discourse because it can place one's understanding over others (Chilton, 1996). Scholars like Goatly (2008) believe that metaphor is an effective persuasion technique. According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is obvious

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that certain elements of the source domains will be automatically highlighted or buried throughout the mapping process. Conceptual metaphor is ideological because of its highlighting and concealing elements, which help people understand meaning and messages that might not be as clearly expressed. This suggests that the metaphors we use can affect how we perceive or decide on particular issues (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 2003).

Politicians and other public personalities may purposefully employ metaphors to give a skewed perspective on a problem (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 2003, Knowles and Moon 2006). In support of the aforementioned, Billig and Macmillan (2005) assert that politicians can use metaphor to emphasise and de-emphasise particular aspects and connections in order to benefit their own groups or repress others. According to Fairclough (1995), metaphors are a potent tool for upholding and strengthening one group's dominance over another. Metaphors have the capability to give a vivid effect. What this implies is that metaphors can arouse the emotions of the readers or listeners. Supporting the above assertion, Simms (2003), asserts that metaphor can both arouse emotions and produce a gratifying effect when readers eventually understand what the authors are trying to convey. Lastly, metaphor can foster mutual understanding of messages between the speakers and the listeners. Examining the use of metaphors among inmates, according to Cameron (2008), within-group metaphors like "porridge" and "screws" in jail jargon help to both maintain intimacy and identify a group.

This study is interested in uncovering the nitty-gritty of leadership by examining leadership's phases and faces through the lens of former President Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch* with a view to understanding why certain decisions were taken, what leadership entails and political leaders perceive leadership and service to be.

Review of Extant Studies

Osisanwo and Alugin (2024) examine metaphorical constructs and semiotic expressions in the BBC Yoruba Internet memes of English Premier League match results. Their study specifically looks at how metaphors are used in the English Premier League football results broadcast on BBC Yoruba, exploring how cultural metaphorical choices influence the meaning of online sports discourse. For the research, they use Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach to multimodality in conjunction with Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory. Their study offers a fresh viewpoint on the intricate connections between language, culture, sports, and entertainment. It also advances our knowledge of how metaphors influence cultural meaning and identity. Their research concludes that the fandom's expectations and societal perspectives are reflected in the use of naming tactics and metaphorical representations.

Akintayo and Olatokunbo (2024) examine the use of metaphor in Nigerian political discourse so as to analyse the creativity in political communication and to reveal the nuanced features of figurative language. Using the cognitive linguistics method created by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), they explored the two main metaphor themes of journey and war in the data. Also, their research offers an analysis of the ways in which political analysts and

politicians engage with the public by using these metaphors as rhetorical tactics. The information provided for study in this section comes from nationally distributed Nigerian newspapers and includes illustrative passages from speeches by prominent Nigerian politicians, public officials, and analysts of the country's democratic experience. Journey and war are two important metaphorical motifs in the data. Their research demonstrates how effective metaphors are in political discourse, confirming that they constitute a crucial component of political communication rather than only an adornment.

Adepoju (2022), examining spatial metaphors in introductory statements of humanities and stem disciplines, investigates the metaphorical framings in the introductory statements of two disciplines in three US research institutions, representing the humanities and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Education (STEM, henceforth). The paper investigates the metaphorical framings in the introductory statements of two disciplines in three US research institutions, representing the humanities and STEM, to understand how these fields create a distinct representational frame for expressing and promoting their image. It highlights how institutional documents such as departmental introductory statements are embedded with metaphorical usages. The paper concludes that the metaphorical framings in the selected introductory statements reinforce the dominant disciplinary values of these programs, which have unsurprisingly elevated public perception of STEM programs over the humanities. It concludes by suggesting that humanities scholars, technical/professional writing programs and other writing-intensive program administrators adopt a more informed perspective towards collaborating with STEM scholars, especially in developing materials that enable students to meaningfully engage the complementarity of the two seemingly different academic worlds.

Kamalu and Iniworikabo (2016) analyse a few political speeches by Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Musa Yar'Adua, and Goodluck Jonathan using the principles of Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). The study primarily examines how speakers utilise metaphors to express their opinions to Nigerians and how metaphors support the discussion of Nigerian nationhood. According to their research, our everyday experiences are infused with metaphors that shape our beliefs and views of politics. The study also shows that even though the three political leaders used distinct languages when speaking to their fans, their most fundamental concepts are full of similar metaphorical phrases that enable a deeper comprehension of meaning to be categorised.

These researches are largely different from the current research as this current research offers an insight into the prevalent faces and phases of leadership, using former president Olusegun Obasanjo's memoir, *My Watch*, as a text of study. It is therefore expedient to state this study aims to consider the faces and phases of leadership in volume two of former president Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch* and explores the concepts of leadership.

Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) began with George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's book, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). They contend that metaphors are ubiquitous in either the most neutral, or unintentionally employed forms of language and in certain genres that aim to elicit a particular artistic effect (like literature). A "source domain" and a "target domain" are distinguished by CMT. Whereas the latter is abstract, the former is tangible. The journey is the source (domain) in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY because it is a much more concrete domain than the target domain of life, which is much more abstract. As with the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, CMT generally suggests that more concrete domains are the source domains for more abstract destinations.

Based on an analysis of hundreds of conceptual metaphors that have been found and examined in the literature thus far, this discovery has been made. Assuming that the majority of conceptual metaphors have more physical domains as suppliers and more abstract domains as ends makes a lot of intuitive sense. For instance, the concept of theory is an intricate mental construct, the concept of rage is an internal feeling that is mostly concealed from us, and so on. These are only a few examples of the concepts that are difficult to define.

In all of them, a less tangible and therefore less accessible target notion is conceptually based on and viewed from a more physical and thus more accessible source concept. To conceptualise the cognitively less accessible domains in terms of the more accessible ones is a much more sensible course of action in our endeavour to comprehend the world. Attempting to conceptualise trips as life, flames as fury, or buildings as theories would be strange and counterintuitive. Because we already know so much more about journey, fire, and buildings than we do about ideas like life, rage, or theory, we would not find this method of comprehending them to be insightful or useful. This is not to argue that conceptualisation may happen in the other direction at all. It might happen, but when it occurs, there is always a unique poetic, stylistic, artistic, and so on. For common and unmarked circumstances, the default path of metaphorical conceptualisation is from more physical to less tangible.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980 and 2003), is regarded as the pioneer work in the field of cognitive linguistics. Simply put, one can comprehend abstract ideas in terms of more concrete and familiar ones by using metaphor as a conceptual tool. Conceptual Metaphor Theory asserts that metaphor highlights the cognitive significance of analogy rather than merely adhering to idiomatic or conventionalised language use. The frequent use of spatial language describes time (in phrases like "the far past", "the near future") or the association of abstractions with tangible objects. Additional instances include phrases that describe orientation in relation to both positive and negative mental and physical states (feeling "up" or "down"); these phrases are occasionally so set that they are regarded as "dead" or demetaphorised. When Johnson (1987) implied this when he avers that metaphorical expressions come from underlying metaphors, which in turn come from human bodily sensations of space, movement, and containment. In support of this, Lakoff and Johnson (1987) assert

that source domains for metaphorical mapping could be picture schemas that arise directly from pre-conceptual embodied experience.

Conceptual metaphor is a conceptual system where one domain, which is the source domain, maps onto another domain, which is the target. A common place example of conceptual metaphor is ARGUMENT IS WAR. Argument and war are two realms that are related in this context. Argument is the target domain (TD), while war is the source domain (SD) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Source domains appear to be more tangible and well-known by using picture schemas or frames for physical or natural occurrences. Source domains are more likely to be obscure and unknown than target domains. The ability of a metaphor to generate meaning is due to the interplay between the source and target domains. Beer and De Landtsheer (2004:10) confirm this with the following words: “the interaction between the source and the target generates a new meaning.” Further, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:10) make it clear that the principle of selectivity comes into play when we engage in metaphorical mapping. According to them “in allowing us to focus on one aspect of a concept, a metaphorical concept can keep us away from focusing on other aspects of the concept that is inconsistent with that metaphor.” Various scholars have explored metaphors from the cognitive perspective with special focus on conceptual metaphors (Chilton 1996, 2005, Koller 2005, Charteris-Black 2006). The diversity of conceptual metaphor theory cannot be overemphasised. Existing studies in the areas have not only deployed it in political discourse but also to unearth how thoughts are structured in music (Ogungbemi and Bamgbose, 2021). This study, however, is constructed within the ambit of political discourse as it sets out to use the Conceptual Metaphor Theory to uncover the phases and faces of leadership in former president Olusegun Obasanjo’s memoir, *My Watch*.

Background Profile: Olusegun Obasanjo

Born on Ifo Market Day in Ibogun-Olaogun, in what was then colonial Nigeria’s Abeokuta Province in the 1930s, former President Olusegun Obasanjo is a farmer, statesman, author, and soldier. He enlisted in the Nigerian Army in 1958 (Obasanjo, 2014). He attended Mons Officers Cadet School in Aldershot and Abeokuta Baptist High School for his education. He became the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army’s Third Marine Commando Division, which put an end to the 30-month Nigerian Civil War, after serving in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo from 1960 to 1961. Obasanjo returned to his position as the Commander of the Nigerian Army Corps of Engineers following the war. In the Gowon Administration, he was named Federal Commissioner (Minister) for Works. Following the 1975 change of government, he was named Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, making him the second-ranking official.

After General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated in a failed putsch, Obasanjo was the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Head of State of the Federal Military Government from 1976 to 1979. In 1979, he turned over power to a civilian government and

retreated to a quiet farming life. As a statesman, he was asked by the world community to co-chair the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group, which was established in 1985 to work on a negotiated settlement for the end of South Africa's Apartheid policy. In 1991, he was also a contender for the position of UN Secretary-General.

Olusegun Obasanjo, a fierce critic of poor governance in Africa, especially in Nigeria, was imprisoned following the Abacha Military Regime's 1995 "phantom coup" trial. After being released from prison in 1998, he ran for president in the lead-up to the military transition to a democratic civilian government. On the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), he was elected and sworn in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999. At the conclusion of his second tenure as president, he resigned in 2007 and went back to his farm. He continues to help the global community in a number of ways. He is currently the chief promoter of the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library.

Among his notable works are *My Command*, which recounts his experiences during the Nigerian Civil War; *Not My Will*, which details his service to the country as Military Head of State; *This Animal Called Man*, which is a philosophical reflection on the nature of man and was written while he was a political prisoner; and *My Watch*, his most recent memoir.

Methodology

The data for this study comprise texts of former president Olusegun Obasanjo's memoir, *My Watch* (Volume 2). This particular volume was preferred considering the fact it contained sociocultural background of the author as well his life as military ruler and his introduction into national politics. More so, volume 2 showed Olusegun Obasanjo's leadership decisions, interactions and negotiations across national and international spheres. A total of 64 excerpts that are metaphoric were purposively selected from this volume, but for the constraint of space and time, 17 excerpts are extracted and searched in their entirety for metaphorical expressions related to leadership. George Lakoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory was deployed to analyse these excerpts within the purview of discourse analysis. The descriptive research method was used for this study.

Analysis

4.3.1 Leading is Serving

Excerpt 1

As I broached the issue, he stopped me and invited for a consultation. (30-2)

Olusegun Obasanjo positions himself as a leader ready to share his knowledge with others here in above excerpt. The lexical choices, 'invited' and 'consultation' showed that he is not someone whose opinion can be sought without certain steps being followed. The focus, however, is on the fact that consultations are being made to learn from him and/or get his opinion over certain things. This shows that Olusegun Obasanjo is a leader who is actually out to serve his people and not to be dictatorial over them. The excerpt, therefore shows a leader who is

given towards serving others by being attentive, accessible, and proactive. These actions embody the principle that exceptional leadership is more of serving, mentoring and supporting others, rather than just exerting authority.

Excerpt 2

If I was a stooge at all, I was a stooge of Nigeria and all Nigerians. (34-2)

Aside the lexical choice of Olusegun Obasanjo that portrays him as someone used by other people to carry out their own ulterior motive, Olusegun Obasanjo has used comparison to mirror himself as someone who is working for the country and its citizens. The expression “I was a stooge of Nigeria and all Nigerians” metaphorises the personality of Olusegun Obasanjo as someone who is fully interested in the Nigeria project and is readily available to serve the citizens of Nigeria. The above, hence, reflects the notion that good leadership involves putting the needs of the country and its citizens first, even when it’s at the jeopardy to one’s ego and personal interest. By stating that he is a stooge of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo places the interest of the country at the forefront above other considerations. This suggests that his decisions, actions and inactions are conspicuously aided by what benefits the country as a whole rather than any particular group, ethnic or individual.

Excerpt 3

I authorized clinical investigation by ICPC and EFCC and that the result of their investigation be made public. (459-2)

The firm decision Olusegun Obasanjo took has been brought to fore with the above excerpt. It shows, in a way, the expediency of transparency. This is suggestive of the fact that Olusegun Obasanjo is a man who runs an all-inclusive policy and is ready to carry every citizen along in his governance. The above excerpt is a representation of being proactive and being ready to serve the citizens. Beyond all these, the writer, as a sitting president at that time, shows his interest in serving the public’s right to be kept abreast of information and political development as these will further promote transparency in governance. This suggests a leader who places the interest of good governance, transparency and public trust above potential personal or political concerns. This goes with the concept that true leadership involves serving the greater good and not amassing power for self-interest.

4.3.2 Leadership is Reforming

Excerpt 4

While working hard at home, I was always on the move to meet world leaders and African leaders one-on-one and show them the new face of Nigeria. (113-2)

Leadership is reforming is another conceptual metaphor used in the autobiography. The source domain, ‘new face of Nigeria is an indication of two major things. One, that the old face of Nigeria which is most likely an unpalatable one and two, that the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo has transformed the country so brilliantly. This identifies Olusegun Obasanjo as a 21st century transformer and one who is really interested in the Nigeria project. He portrays leadership here as an active process of change and engagement. It suggests that reform is not only about implementing new policies, but also changing human perceptions. Therefore, the excerpt shows how a leader can be the catalyst and representation of reform efforts.

Excerpt 5

The idea of creating a new Federal Capital outside Lagos was my idea... and I made sure it was taken beyond the point of no return before I left government.
(86-2)

Leadership entails being a trailblazer and this is evidently presented in the above excerpt where Olusegun Obasanjo succinctly links his idea with an excellent development. The activities of Olusegun Obasanjo, with this excerpt, could be referred to as excellent, spot-on, and insightful. This, therefore, identifies Olusegun Obasanjo as someone who is insightful and an exemplar in leadership. This approach to leadership goes beyond mere management of existing systems and actively works to reshape and improve them for the future, therefore embodying the concept that true leadership involves meaningful reform and transformation.

4.3.3 Leading is Fighting

Excerpt 6

One issue I decided to fight head-on when I accepted to contest was corruption.
(426-2)

In the above excerpt, there is the corruption as a concept that is capable of fighting. Leading the government therefore translates to being in the position to fight corruption. Corruption here can be referred to as an enemy of the government and thus has been vividly painted as a negative but pervading menace. The excerpt places Olusegun Obasanjo as a man that is morally upright and would not get himself involved in any corrupt activity.

Excerpt 7

I was therefore ready to battle the hydra-headed monster of corruption...
(427-2)

The adjectives, ‘hydra-headed’ and ‘monster’, give clear representation of the kind of evil corruption is. The battle connotes battle. This, however, does not mean Olusegun Obasanjo was going to fight corruption with his fists as expected in fights. The metaphoric interpretation

here is significant as it can be deduced that Olusegun Obasanjo is not tainted with corruption and, as a matter of fact, he is ready to put an end to corruption in the government.

4.3.4 Prison is Bliss

Excerpt 8

When I was talking to Nelson Mandela, he told me that two things make for wisdom, equanimity and calmness. He mentioned them as age and prison experience. (228-2)

Here, prison as a source domain for knowledge, and Olusegun Obasanjo in the above excerpt clearly points out that prison has material value, and it is one of the factors that can engender progress and success in a man's life. The prison is metaphorised as a stepping stone unto greatness. This is in sharp contrast to what people know the prison for – a place where those who had acted against the constitution of a country are kept with the hope that they become humans over a period of time. It is, however, important to state that the prison also housed many politicians and journalists who had divergent opinions to those in power at different points in time.

Excerpt 9

Prison gives you a unique opportunity for reflection. (228-2)

Here, Olusegun Obasanjo, in the autobiography, conceptually metaphorised prison as bliss. Lakoff (1993:208) notes that “metaphors map a source domain onto a target domain”. In this excerpt, prison is used to represent a place where one encounters the good things of life. The target domain here is prison and the source domain is wisdom, equanimity and calmness. The conceptualization of prison as a place where wisdom obtained is a sharp contrast to the literal expectation of a place as such. The general assumption of a prison is that it is a place where criminals or offenders are punished and rehabilitated. In this excerpt, Olusegun Obasanjo has carefully described what he gained whilst he was in prison and to point out that being in prison is not entirely time wasteful.

Excerpt 10

Three things came together to make my election as President possible: the grace of God, my track record and Abacha sending me to jail. (228-2)

Here in the above excerpt, the target domain is opportunity for reflection while the source domain is prison. Reflection sharpens the thought of a man as it allows a man to become critical and objective before making decisions. Having likened the prison as a place where reflections are made, Olusegun Obasanjo contextually positioned himself as a man who is critical and rational about decisions taken as he was a prisoner shortly before becoming a democratically elected president of Nigeria.

4.3.5 Hearing from God is a Validation for Leadership

Excerpt 11

In the process of my early consultation...the first person I asked for help was Pastor Enoch Adeboye. I asked him to pray and join me in seeking God's face and guidance on my decision. (22-2)

In excerpt, there is the mention of "God's face and guidance" meaning supreme guidance. The belief in the cultural setting of the author is that God, the supreme being, supersedes everything and everyone and the necessity of seeking His approval cannot be overemphasized by anyone. The excerpt presents the writer as someone who is conscious of the God factor and one who is spiritually inclined in spite of his political aspirations. One could easily deduce that Olusegun Obasanjo places God over every one and the 'face of God' is a trigger for the pursuance of his aspiration.

4.3.6 Leading is Chameleonic

Excerpt 12

I can be a patient listener when necessary or be impulsive and unpredictable also when necessary (24-2)

The dual nature of the writer was brought to fore as realised in the above excerpt. The source domains, 'patient leader'; 'impulsive and unpredictable' describe the chameleonic lifestyles that accompany leadership position. The writer identified 'patient listener' to inform the reader of his readiness to listen to contributions aimed at moving the nation forward and identified being 'impulsive and unpredictable' to inform the reader that indeed, the bulk stops at his table and final decisions would be taken by him.

Excerpt 13

I came to realize that a lot of what I had learned in the military... are relevant in politics. (24-2)

The place listed here as a reservoir for learning is a pointer to the fact that politics is a place where all resources are necessary. The military as mentioned by the writer represent the platform that gave him the needed requirements for success in politics. Here, Olusegun Obasanjo has carefully used the military as a representation of a place where lessons that transcend military itself are learned. This identified Olusegun Obasanjo as someone whose relevance in the Nigerian politics is coloured by the lessons garnered over the years in the military.

4.3.7 Leading is Studying

Excerpt 14

I learnt that nothing shapes your mind and intellect like reading biographies. (24-2)

Biography here represents a tool that sharpens the mind of intellectuals. Olusegun Obasanjo subtly here positioned himself as someone who is in the position to discern what sharpens someone's mind. This situates him as a man who has read a lot of biographies and learnt many things therein which in turn, had sharpened his mind and made him an intellect. The above excerpt shows how studying helps the leader to learn from others' experiences, how it leads to self-development, and encourages analytical thinking amongst others. All these frame leadership not as an innate quality, but as a skill that can be developed through dedicated study and reflection on others' experiences.

4.3.8 Leading is being Resolute

Excerpt 15

Sunday broached the issue that since I did not win my local government, I should withdraw from the race... I told them I was already in the water. (26-2)

Water here is used in comparison with politics. People relate politics with a lot of things. Such relationships include the transfer of the source domain, 'water' to the target domain 'politics'. In politics, the general conception is that it is synonymous to a way of life and what people do to keep their relevance and thus, it is like an occupation to these people. The consequence of using water here centres on the fact that he has already considered politics as a place to prove his relevance. Thus, as someone who has already entered politics, he might not leave anytime soon. This identified Olusegun Obasanjo as a resolute type of person who remains devoted to his convictions.

4.3.9 Leading is Healing

Excerpt 16

I am happy that by nominating me today as the PDP flag-bearer, we will have buried the illogical polarization of the nation into soldiers and non-soldiers. (29-2)

The sole action of nominating Olusegun Obasanjo is a representation of the fact that animosities and polarisations have been buried. Here, Olusegun Obasanjo represents healing process for those who have polarised politicians as either being soldiers or non-soldiers. This identifies Olusegun Obasanjo, not only as a link between both sides but also as one on whose mandate people come together to pursue a cause. Considering the context of the above excerpt, one sees how a leader can serve as a unifying figure, working to overcome historical divisions and promote national reconciliation. By presenting himself as a bridge, Olusegun Obasanjo positions his role as one that can heal past wounds and bring people together. This approach to leadership focuses on addressing and healing societal rifts, rather than exploiting them for political gain. It suggests that effective leadership involves recognising the divisions within a society and actively working to overcome them, thus promoting healing on a national scale.

4.3.10 Accomplishment is Popularity

Excerpt 17

I went to a meeting once and somebody who had heard my name, achievements and reputation ... (24-2)

Here, Olusegun Obasanjo metaphorises his accomplishments as ‘my name’. Lexical choices such as ‘name’, ‘achievements’ and ‘reputation’ are indications of a successful and dedicated leader. All these portray Olusegun Obasanjo as a man who has written his name in the history of the country and who can be referred to as a legend.

Discussions and Conclusion

This research shows that metaphors are more than just rhetorical devices; they are essential for illustrating how leadership is described in political memoirs. It shows how leadership evolves. The excerpts considered reveal how changing conditions, internal demands, and outside influences all constantly mould and develop leadership.

The paper also shows that metaphors help readers understand the subtle aspects of leadership by providing them with a deeper understanding of the decision-making process, moral conundrums, and internal conflicts that leaders encounter. Political memoirs offer a more personal, psychological examination of leadership through the use of these figurative language that goes beyond simple factual retelling. The metaphors serve as a bridge, connecting the abstract and multifaceted experiences of leadership with the reader’s comprehension. Then study shows that political memoirs’ use of metaphors provides a special perspective on the faces and phases of leadership.

Throughout their careers, political leaders frequently go through several stages, including gaining prominence, experiencing crises and reflecting as all these are evident in Olusegun Obasanjo’s *My Watch*. Like leadership, which is cyclical and ever evolving, each phase has its own set of difficulties and opportunities for growth. With the aid of Lakoff’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is evident that memoirs provide a deeper reflection on the intellectual and emotional growth that goes along with leadership.

Finally, our research shows that metaphors are effective devices in political memoirs that provide readers with a deeper comprehension of leadership. Readers can understand the faces and phases of leadership that are frequently overlooked in more factual or cursory accounts. Metaphors in memoirs enables a more comprehensive representation of leadership, illuminating both its demands from the outside and its internal complexity. It enhances the reader’s interaction with the material and advances the idea that leadership is a dynamic, ever-evolving process in general. These observations make significant contributions to the field of political discourse, particularly in terms of our comprehension of how those in positions of authority reconcile the personal and professional facets of their responsibilities.

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