# How Conceptual Metaphors Make Political Iconography: A Focus Group Discussion on the Psychological Aspects

## Vishaka Venkat and Vinod Balakrishnan

**Abstract** Political cartoons constitute a critical interface of sociopolitical communication. The cartoonist, who is a principal player in building sociopolitical iconography, registers a historical moment by constructing a memory of the political system. The cartoon being a mass medium, addresses directly, in a recognisably metaphorical language; whereby, iconography circulates in the public sphere. A psychological analysis of visual metaphors would enlighten one about the process by which social perception develops and how public opinion gets configured. Metaphors are capable of configuring the quotidian, and they also add a new reference to the event. Political metaphors by the cartoonist present behavioural templates; on the one hand, the gestures of the politicians are provided while on the other, a cycle of thought and action is initiated within the readers; thus an icon is built as well as an opinion is shaped. The conceptual metaphor theory by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) supplies a framework to understand how a cartoonist, utilising metaphors to build iconography, influences public opinion. How are these metaphors directed? The authors employ focus group discussion (FGD) and a survey among 35 students for a pilot study to analyse the group perception and to study how the effect of iconography is played out. A selection of 20 cartoons on the linguistic issue and state organisation, faced by Jawahar Lal Nehru as portrayed by Shankar in '*Don't Spare Me Shankar*' (1983), has been chosen for the study. How has Shankar portrayed the dilemma of Nehru? What are the metaphors employed by the cartoonist for the pictorial representation? How are these metaphors received by the group? The psychological investigation through metaphors will initiate a probe into the way a cartoonist thinks and how he

V. Venkat (✉) · V. Balakrishnan
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli, India
e-mail: vishaka.venkat1992@gmail.com

V. Balakrishnan
e-mail: winokrish@yahoo.co.uk

affects the group perception and the process of building iconography. On the whole, the paper will analyse the interaction between the cartoonist and the public through metaphors.

**Keywords** Conceptual metaphor · Political iconography · Psychological impact

# 1 Introduction

> The mind is inherently embodied. Thought is mostly unconscious. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 3)

Marga Reimer and Elisabeth Camp's definition of metaphor as a trope or figure of speech by which 'one thing is represented as something else' (Camp & Reimer, 2006, p. 845) gives a précis of the early theoretical conceptualisation of metaphors as a tool for figurative language; a poetic device which enhances rhetorical beauty by camouflaging ordinary thoughts and presenting them as imaginative comparisons. Metaphorical analysis, key to hidden ideas and intuitions, became exclusive to interpretation and practical criticism of poetic texts. The conceptual (cognitive) metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *The Metaphors We Live By* (1980) revolutionised the way metaphors were conceived, as they argued for the whole system of thinking to be metaphorical in nature and not merely limited to embellishing poetry. The metaphor, seen thus, is a pervasive thinking pattern (Gibbs & Raymond, 2011) in our lives.

How are metaphors different from conceptual metaphors? Metaphors, on the one hand, are more linguistic in nature and serve an exclusive function of addressing the extraordinary. Conceptual metaphors, on the other hand, are pragmatic and are intrusive in nature even as they confront the quotidian. While metaphors indicate creativity, say, in literature, conceptual metaphors examine the commonness and the thought process of humans in general. On the whole, conceptual metaphors have a holistic orientation as they are omnipresent and are critical to building the memory system by concretising the abstract. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999) recognises the mind to be embodied and thoughts to be unconscious. How are these unconscious thoughts embodied through experience? Through the study of conceptual metaphors, inadvertently, the process of cognition is evaluated. Metaphors make 'known experiences' manifest as an object of equivalence, and they mediate between the unconscious and embodied cognition to construct a perception. As Andrew Ortony says:

> Cognition is the result of mental construction. Knowledge of reality, whether occasioned by perception, language, or memory, necessitates going beyond the information given. It arises through the interaction of that information with the context in which it is presented and with the knower's pre existing knowledge. (Ortony, 1993, p. 1).

Metaphorical cognition, similarly, is constructed through language or memory involving an interaction with the context and the subjective knowledge. This particular study sees how this process of reception in the public sphere happens through

political iconography. Beginning by gauging its presence in language, conceptual metaphor theory has been applied to several fields. How does the metaphorical language of an image impact its audience? (Marín-Arrese, 2008; Negro, 2013; Refaie, 2003; Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011). To address this question, the paper studies how conceptual metaphors play a significant role in building political iconographic memory through a semiotic study of political cartoons and their psychological impact on the audience. Iconography [derived from two words: *eikon* (image) and *graphien* (writing) (Straten, 1994)] is the study of image writing or image describing. Political cartoons being emblematic and encapsulated representations of political situations communicate a certain amount of factual knowledge as well as exaggerate the truth represented. As a mass medium, they directly communicate with the citizens through newspapers and periodicals aiding in the shaping of public opinion and the building of an image about the political system. The study of conceptual metaphors in political iconography, thus, would throw light on the process of how political memory and icons are constructed.

A collection of twenty cartoons drawn by Shankar from '*Don't Spare Me Shankar*' on the issue of demand for linguistic states has been selected for the study. Considering the cartoonist to be the keeper of history, political cartoons document the sociopolitical and cultural events to preserve a political memory and historical past of a country. K. Shankar Pillai, father of Indian political cartooning, through *Shankar's Weekly* (also called *India's Punch*) which ran from 1948 to 1975, was among the first to chronicle post-independent Indian history. Most of his cartoons were on Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India) portraying his dilemma in building India as a nation which witnessed endless troubles during the demand for language-based regional autonomy. Through this pilot study on metaphors, one can gauge the cartoonist's view towards the polity and validate the universality of conceptual metaphors by analysing the audience response through focus group discussion (eight members) and a survey (35 samples). The paper looks at the purpose of employing metaphors in cartoons and how they act as conceptual metaphors, which can answer questions like: Whose perspective do the cartoons represent? How are conceptual metaphors directed? Is there a common framework for the conceptual metaphors? And finally, how does the audience relate to the cartoons?

## 2 Metaphorical Thinking

The word 'metaphor' is composed of two words: *meta* (go beyond/crossover) and *pherin/phora* (to carry or bear) (Bourke, 2014, p. 54), which exhibit its potential to move beyond the apparent, bearing meanings which can infuse new insights and intuitions. In *Philosophy of the Rhetoric* (1936), I. A. Richards' division into 'tenor' and 'vehicle' (Russo, 2015) examined metaphors as a medium of comparison affecting the rhetoric. The 'sense' metaphor and 'emotive' (Bilsky, 1952 p.130) metaphor convey Richards' dynamic approach to view metaphors as capable of manipulating feelings. Weller Embler in *Metaphor and Meaning* (1966), inspired

from Michel Bréal's *Semantics* (1900), expanded the notion of the universality of metaphors, foreseeing it as a decisive tool for comprehension. Philip Wheelwright's 'diaphor' in *Metaphor and Reality* (1968) saw the involvement of sociocultural milieu that complemented the discernment of metaphor. Gradually, studies in metaphor progressed from a communicative function to a cognitive aspect. Andrew Ortony, Ralph E. Reynolds and Judith A. Arter in *Metaphor: Theoretical and Empirical Research* (1978) emphasised the need for psychological theory as metaphors exposed the way humans frame language. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *The Metaphors We Live By* (1980) witnessed a culmination of all the features said above, as they argued for metaphors to be social, personal, intuitive and directive in nature.

Lakoff and Johnson affirm metaphor to be the concepts to which one can relate and are found, not just in language but in thought and action too, as they say, 'Our … conceptual system … is fundamentally metaphorical in nature' (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 3). For example when one involves in an argument, one tries to 'defend' one's views; 'counter-attack' the perspectives of the 'opponent' to 'win' the argument. An analysis of the referents above suggests that an abstract concept like 'argument' is equated with 'war field' (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 4). This process of parallelism happens unconsciously, revealing that rather than labelling language to be metaphorical, metaphors are the way by which one lives, thinks and acts. This concept of parallel thinking was earlier suggested by Arthur Koestler in his book *The Act of Creation* through 'bisociation'[1]. Michael Reddy's conduit metaphor (1979), the forerunner of conceptual metaphor, considered any linguistic expression to be 'containers' that communicated 'mental contents' (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 10). The metaphor is a metalanguage which provides thinking frames to discern hidden patterns. It takes the artist's creativity to tap such metaphors and make them explicit.

Conceptual metaphors are sometimes structural, sometimes orientational and at other times ontological (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003): (1) Structural metaphors explain one structure in terms of another like 'argument as war', 'time is money' and 'theories as buildings'. (2) Orientational metaphors involve spatial orientations, for example the way one associates feelings and qualities with 'up' (good, life, prosperity) and 'down' (bad, death, poverty). (3) Ontological metaphors describe experiences through objects, bodily parts or events using personification, metonymy and synecdoche. All these metaphors have an 'interactional and experiential' (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) basis which keep differing in the way they are used by individuals. Marking the beginning of a socio-psychological probe into metaphors, conceptual metaphors were further developed as conceptual blending[2] by Gilles

---

[1]The concept of bisociation explains the way mind associates an idea with two different fields, which are probably unrelated. A pun is an example of bisociation.

[2]Conceptual blending is a successor of bisociation and evaluates the cognitive process of blending mental spaces from the generic space into a new blended space.

Fauconnier and Mark Tuner in *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (2002).

## 3  Political Metaphor and Cognition

In 'The World Outside and The Pictures in Our Heads', Walter Lippman substantiates the power of media in shaping public opinion; political cartoons are no exception. Following the theory of Max McCombs and Donald Shaw, political cartoons act as the base for 'agenda-setting[3]', and they unknowingly exert influence on the public which the authors term as 'priming effect'[4] (Coleman & Wu, 2015) demonstrating the metaphor's potential. Victor Ottati, Randall Renstrom and Erika Price while discussing the efficacy of political metaphors in 'The Metaphorical Framing Model: Political Communication and Public Opinion' have proposed the metaphor framing model, which argues for the presence of 'root metaphor' (2014 p.179) (conceptual metaphor) invoking a political event. What are the root metaphors used by Shankar in his cartoons and how does it affect the receiver in shaping an opinion towards polity? Though political cartoons are 'multimodal',[5] (Bounegru & Forceville, 2011) the study mainly focuses on visual metaphors. Similar to tenor and vehicle, there are two domains in conceptual metaphors: the source domain and the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). While the former is concrete, the target domain is abstract. Through the interaction between the target and the source domains, the cognitive process and impact on the audience can be measured. In the study, the linguistic issue is the target, and the metaphors used to describe them are the sources.

Metaphors in political speeches illustrate the art of persuasion (Mio, 1997 p. 113). The metaphorical usage of seeing the nation as family and the leader as a parent, who cares for the citizens and nurtures them as children, is commonplace though effective as citizens easily relate to it. What kind of metaphors has Shankar used in the cartoons? How has he represented Mr. Nehru and the nation? Ottati, Renstrom and Price suggest different stages in cognising metaphors; they are primarily: metaphor activation (where root/conceptual metaphor is kindled) and metaphor application (the storyline in which it is applied) (Ottati, Renstrom, & Price, 2014 p. 184). The way metaphors are triggered depends on the context and the platform for interaction. The stages of systematic processing of metaphor cognition are: 'information seeking, selective information processing, interpretation

---

[3]Agenda-setting theory asserts the power of media and their influence in prioritising news as well as shaping public opinion through their news coverage.

[4]Priming (memory effect) is a study in psychology which examines how the triggering of one stimulus results in the reaction to another stimulus.

[5]Charles Forceville's multimodal metaphors (Forceville & Urios-Apraisi, 2009 p. 3) explain the involvement of different modes in metaphors (like the visual and the verbal). The target and the source domain in multimodal metaphors are presented through multiple levels of perception.
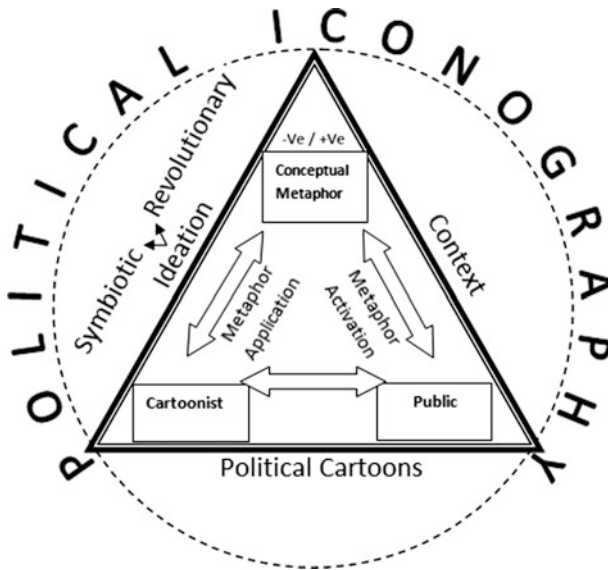
**Fig. 1** Focus model

of ambiguous information; as well as metaphor-guided attribution, inference, and elaboration' (Ottati et al., 2014 p. 180); political cartoons seek information, and the cartoonist makes a selection of the information that has to be projected. The message is communicated in an ambiguous manner and inferred by the public. The metaphors act as information-processing tools and create a political reality. As Edelman says 'metaphors form a pattern of perception to which people respond' (qtd. in Goatly, 2007, p. 30) and can easily generate a psychological reactance. The arrest of Ambikesh Mahapatra after the circulation of political cartoons of the Chief Minister of West Bengal and the case of Aseem Trivedi who was charged with sedition for demeaning the national symbols, exposes the 'psychological reactance' and show how politicians as well as the Government are vigilant about the way political cartoons build image and memory.

The model (Fig. 1) unravels the key terms and the focus of the paper. Within the circumference of political iconography, the study looks at the interaction between the cartoonist, conceptual metaphor and the public through political cartoons. The study attempts to prove that the directionality of metaphors is based on the cartoonist's inclination and though conceptual metaphors are universal; there is an influence of the context in framing as well as receiving them. Through the process of ideation (creative process), the cartoonist comes up with a metaphor (stage of metaphor application) which can be either 'revolutionary' or 'symbiotic'.[6]

---

[6]Graham and Bachmann describe various types of ideation in their book *Ideation: The Birth and Death of Ideas* (2004) pp. 44–47.

Revolutionary ideas attempt to subvert the conventional notions while symbiotic ideas are mutually benefitting. Depending on these ideas, metaphors can either be positive or negative. People receive them (metaphor activation) in different ways depending on the environment that surrounds them. In this particular study, respondents from different states differ in their reception as they relate differently to the issue.

## 4 Historical Background

Post-independent India had to face the challenge of consolidating itself as a nation state. The British Provinces presented a non-cohesive India which undermined her cultural affinity (Chandra, Mukherjee, & Mukherjee, 2008). Language, the binding cement of culture, was the principal element for states' reorganisation. In 1921, the Indian National Congress proposed the policy of linguistic states and a recasting according to regional languages. Post-partition, leaders debated the demand for linguistic states; as a result, a committee under Justice S. K. Dar was formed in 1948. The recommendations of the committee considered the demand as a threat to national unity. The JVP committee (1949) led by Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya reinvestigated the issue and proposed to postpone the reorganisation of linguistic states; meanwhile, the nation witnessed the *Visalandhra* (the United Andhra) movement. The death of Potti Sriramulu who went on a fast unto death for the cause incited the citizens. Finally, the Government buckled, and the Andhra state was created in 1953. The State Reorganisation Committee (SRC) formed in August 1953 which included Justice Fazl Ali, K. M. Panikkar and Hridaynath Kunzru, submitted the report in October 1955. The recommendations were passed in November 1956 with a few modifications, and fourteen states were formed with six territories. Still, the thirst for linguistic states remained unquenched, and Bombay was further divided into Maharashtra and Gujarat. Since then disputes have continued, and many independent states have been created. From fourteen states, now India has been reorganised into twenty-nine states.

## 5 Methodology

To measure the psychological impact of the conceptual metaphors through cartoons, two groups were studied. The first group included 35 participants among whom the survey was conducted. They were each given a set of five cartoons along with the questionnaire which inquired about their feelings towards the cartoons. To familiarise the students with the political cartoons, a pre-questionnaire presentation was made, in which the purpose of the study and the historical background were introduced to the students. The data have been analysed based on frequency distribution of the responses. Eight research scholars from varying backgrounds, who

are avid newspaper readers, were invited for the focus group discussion. The discussion lasted for an hour. The following questions, also identified as the objectives, were discussed:

(a) Why does a cartoonist employ metaphors?
(b) How would you rate the veracity of the cartoons presented?
(c) What are the metaphors employed by the cartoonist? How have these metaphors added to your knowledge?
(d) Has the author been successful in conveying the message in an unbiased manner?
(e) Guess the artist's view about Nehru? How do you relate to Nehru?
(f) Whose perspective do the cartoons present? Substantiate your view.
(g) Can you easily relate to the metaphors? Are the metaphors straightforward or 'poetic'?
(h) On the whole, how do you rate the directionality of the metaphors?

While the focus group discussion helped in understanding the experiential gestalt of the group the questionnaire aided in quantifying the psychological impact.

## 6   Focus Group Discussion—Analysis of Cartoons

To study the behaviour of the audience towards political metaphor, eight research scholars drawn from the departments of English, Economics and Maths were invited for the discussion. The group involved three female and five male members. The age of the members ranged from 26 to 57 and hailed mainly from the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the first five minutes of the discussion, members were introduced to each other, and a preview was given to the discussion. A set of twenty cartoons were distributed to each member; keeping in mind the fleeting attention editorial cartoons receive, the members were given around 15 minutes to examine the cartoons. The questions as mentioned in the methodology were discussed, and members were put at ease to express their opinions. Majority of the members rated the metaphorical representation as negative towards the linguistic issue, and it prompted them to empathise with Nehru. Each cartoon has been analysed in the first session, and the interpretation has been supported by the views of the members.

Around twenty metaphors were identified in the political cartoons taken from '*Don't Spare Me Shankar*' a collection published by Children's Book Trust. The publication of the cartoons spanned from 20 June 1948 to 29 October 1961. As one analyses the common thread running through cartoons, one can easily comprehend that the cartoons follow a kind of moral dualism. All the cartoons involve only two characters, Nehru and the linguistic issue. Either Nehru is overpowering (as the charmer, trickster or the tamer) or the demand for linguist states is cumbersome (as the fluttering fly, bop bag, Frankenstein, dragon's teeth, etc.). The cartoonist presents the situation in a Manichaean binary opposition, where the subject is always

**Table 1** Conceptual metaphors found in the cartoons

| Conceptual/root metaphors | Number of metaphors |
| --- | --- |
| Teacher–student | 2 |
| Tamer and the tamed | 9 |
| Scrounger | 2 |
| The recalcitrant | 7 |

in a confrontation between the light and dark, good and bad, self and the other and strong and weak. Such power dynamics found in the metaphors provide a platform to judge Nehru. How has Nehru as a leader faced the issue? This power dichotomy, pivotal in constructing identity and representational politics, can be related to the colonial masters who schemed to control the colonies through divide and rule. As Albert Memmi commented, 'the colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonised' (Memmi, 2013, p. 100), colonialism fabricated the identities of the coloniser and the colonised. *The Coloniser and the Colonised* (1957) by Albert Memmi, originally published in French, illustrates the psychological implications of colonialism. The book has been divided into two: the 'Portrait of the Coloniser' and the 'Portrait of the Colonised', wherein the author unravels how the identity of the coloniser as well as the colonised has been constructed. The colonised is the 'humbling', 'lazy', 'litany of faults and inadequacies', 'muscular' and a 'hopeless weakling' (Memmi, 2013). Coloniser on the other hand is 'exalting', strong and 'legitimate', as he says 'whenever the colonizer adds that the colonized is a wicked, backward person, he thus justifies his police and his legitimate severity…' (Memmi, 2013, p. 126). The same dualism follows in the cartoons too, as they were published during the post-independent era when India was struggling to unify as a nation and its administration carried traces of colonialism. Inadvertently, the metaphors too have an embedded colonial character. In *Learning the Media* (1987), Manuel Alvarado, Robin Gutch and Tana Wollen proposed four categories of racial stereotypes. They are namely: 'exotic', 'humorous', 'dangerous' and 'pitied' (Watson & Hill, 2015). Observing this pattern, the metaphors can be divided into four types: (a) teacher–student, (b) tamer and the tamed, (c) scrounger and (d) the recalcitrant. The recalcitrant and scrounger are direct adaptations of the 'dangerous' and the 'pitied'. Tamer-tamed and teacher–student are the modified categories. Tamer-tamed is an extended category of the 'dangerous'. The metaphor of teacher–student forwards the colonial model of how a teacher (Whites) has the duty to guide the unintelligent students (Natives). The categories of conceptual metaphors are both structural and orientational. Colonial metaphors in their divisions follow a spatial orientation of high (mother, guide, white) and low (child, ignorant, dark). The following table enumerates the occurrences of metaphors in the collection.

## 6.1 Teacher–Student

This category comprises of two cartoons. The first cartoon 'The Hindi Test' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 5) shows Nehru as a stout and the strong-willed teacher who is burdened with the duty of educating the students (which includes cabinet ministers of Nehru from the South) who had failed in the Hindi proficiency test. On the walls hang the map of India which shows South India as a blank space. This metaphor of teacher–student stereotypes the non-Hindi community as they have to be governed and taught by the bureaucrats from the North. While in the second cartoon 'Take it From Us' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 33), Nehru himself becomes a student along with other politicians where they are awestruck to see the Hindi equivalent term for 'Sovereign Independent Republic'. Among the students, there are some who are uninterested as they play *tic-tac-toe* and some of them are just about to exit as the teacher is deeply immersed in teaching Hindi. The teacher presented is a Brahmin who again becomes the symbol of Sanskritisation. The cartoonist himself mocks the situation of declaring Hindi as an official language and how politicians were unaware of the repercussions as they were, themselves, not proficient in Hindi as the chosen language for administration.

The focus group discussion members took the teacher–student metaphors to be offensive as they felt that someone from the North had to come to teach the South Indian Bureaucrats the idea of national integration which required an official language to carry out its administration. As most of the members in the group were from non-Hindi-speaking regions, they were upset with the presence of superior–inferior relationship that always existed between the North and the South.

## 6.2 Tamer and the Tamed

Among the metaphors employed, the most common is the tamer and the tamed. In the cartoon, 'The Charmer and the Charmed' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 111), Nehru is the charmer, and the states are the poisonous snakes. While the rest of the snakes have been charmed, the one left is the Telugu state. In 'Coaxing the Genie Back' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 173) cartoon, Nehru is the magician, who is tricking the 'genie of linguism' into an urn. The urn represents the State Reorganisation Committee, which tries to trap the linguistic monster. Here again, Nehru is in an attempt to tame the monster. In the next cartoon ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 175), Nehru tries to tame the tiger, which represents the State Reorganisation Committee, presenting his dilemma, as the committee which like the tiger turns against him. The 'Deeper and Deeper' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 189) cartoon portrays Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant going deep into a pond as they relentlessly follow the fluttering fly of lingism with the flycatcher. This metaphor of fluttering fly represents the demand for linguistic states as far fetched which was slowly entrapping the politicians into a muddled administration.

Again, linguism is the biting dog, in the cartoon 'The Pet I Bought' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 293), which has turned against its own master. The cartoon titled 'The Age of Chivalry is Here Again' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 294), Nehru is shown as the brave knight, set out on a quest for rescuing the Damsel (Assam) by killing the dragon (Language War). This metaphorical representation heralded the Bengali language movement in Assam which ushered a bloody historical chapter. The 'Parlour Game' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 320) reverses the tamer-tamed metaphor, as Nehru himself becomes the prey. Mr. Nehru is shown as a butterfly caught in a cobweb, surrounded by spiders (languages), all ready to feed on him. 'Parlour game' suggests the infinite play (the challenge of linguism) using logic till the players (the states) decide to end the game. In the next cartoon (pg. 321), Nehru is addressed as the tamer, walking audaciously with the whip into the cage with animals like Lion (provincialism), tiger (linguism) and cheetah (casteism). Among the animals, the naughtiest is the tiger bearing a malicious look while the rest look tired and baffled. The election-year edition ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 330) saw Nehru as a bullfighter pitted against the enraged bulls of linguism and communalism. The tamer and the tamed metaphors have pictured Nehru as the brave and hard-working leader struggling to resolve the problem.

One of the participants recognised that the cartoonist has visualised the Malayalam idiom '*Nairu Pidicha Pulivalu*' (The Nair who caught the tiger by the tail) which presents Nehru's dilemma as he gets hold off an unmanageable issue. The group also identified the metaphors to be portraying the identity politics of India, especially, in the cartoon where the animals represent casteism, communalism, provincialism and linguism. Throughout the discussion, the members felt that the cartoonist is against the linguistic issue and has given a flippant representation, even that of a fly. The tamer and the tamed metaphor, though portrays Nehru as a potential leader, it also insinuates that the ones to be tamed, are the ones, who are violent and unbridled; also they are the fools who can easily be tricked by their masters. This again follows a colonial subtext.

## 6.3 Scrounger

There are two major cartoons employing the metaphor of begging and the impoverished. In the first cartoon ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 24), the non-Hindi-speaking community is represented as an impoverished man carrying his burden like a donkey. This 'man-donkey' is ridden by four politicians who are vehement supporters of Hindi. The cartoon entitled 'Buying Trouble' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 124) portrays the states as beggars. Mr. Nehru makes an entry into the cartoon as a strong-willed man. One woman (Andhra) begs, and Nehru walks off indifferently. The woman cries a lot, and Nehru finally gives her alms. Following which the rest of the states, characterised as beggars, run after Nehru, and finally, he exits the panel with a dreadful expression. Here again the depiction

of the states as scroungers reinforces the idea that the states are incapable of governing themselves, and they are dependent on the centre whose pity they crave.

The members during the discussion were agitated at the rendering of the 'demographics' in the cartoons. Citizens and their demand for linguistic states were targets to be tackled. The images of the crowd as snakes, beggars and the impoverished man projected the citizens as unthinking, who could be easily charmed and silenced. The idea of democracy as conveyed through the cartoons is that of providing minimal allowance to the people, thereby, keeping them at bay; politicians are rather tricksters who have all the charms to fool the people which echoes Rudyard Kipling's, 'Take up the White Man's burden, The savage wars of peace-Fill full the mouth of Famine' (qtd. in Spielvogel, 2009, p. 521). The agitation of the group points to the presence of such power dynamics.

## 6.4   The Recalcitrant

Under this category, a collection of seven cartoons portrays the uncooperative attitude of the people. The 'Cheap Housing' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 131) cartoon uses a positive metaphor as Nehru is shown as the architect of post-independent India, struggling to consolidate the nation. On the one hand, Nehru builds a single building representing national unity; on the other hand, politicians construct their own rooms (signifying the linguistic states). In 'dragon's teeth' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 163), Shankar metaphorises the idea of linguism as the dragon's teeth, referring to the Greek myth of how the dragon's teeth were sowed to reap armed warriors out of them. Cadmus after slaying the dragon buried the teeth from which Spartoi (the clan of valiant soldiers) arose. Similarly, the idea of linguistic states is also seen as one that manifested fearful soldiers. In the cartoon, 'Cause and Effect' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 178), the linguistic states are illustrated as an 'alcoholic'. On the one side, Nehru distributes the potion of linguistic idea, and on the other side, people go berserk as they become addicted and begin attacking each other. In the cartoon titled 'Tug of War' ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 229), Nehru is caught between the fat gigantic woman (Hindi) and the slim and small women (representing other languages). This metaphor implies the lion's share Hindi language had attained in India as it was accepted by many as the national language. In the 'Frankenstein' cartoon ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 296), the monster strangles a woman who symbolises the unity of India echoing how the monster turned against his master. This context portrays the Congress's demand for linguistic states as a monster with no conscience that went on a killing spree. The cartoon where linguistic states are bop bags ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 317), knocks Nehru hard making him extremely tired. The final cartoon ('Don't Spare Me Shankar' p. 333) in the collection metaphorises the issue of Hindi versus other languages. Hindi again is symbolised as a virtuous domestic woman while Urdu, a minor language, is the new alluring woman.

Examining the recalcitrant metaphor, some of the cartoons reinforce stereotypes. The cartoons where Hindi is shown as the fat lady/housewife, unity of India as a woman and Assam as a damsel, give the linguistic issue a feminine representation and convey the thought that the problem has to be suppressed just like women who are, in a patriarchal society, both dominated by as well as protected by the men. The states represented as addicts and as bop bag and Frankenstein portray them as monsters. The metaphors, on the whole, also manifest the need for power to govern and navigate the problem. The group members also felt that the metaphorical representations of the states were quite stereotypical. The metaphors for recalcitrance were powerful enough to foment the historical struggles of the states against declaring Hindi as the national language. From the discussion, there was a slight deviation to a debating platform. This, in turn, validated the rhetoric of metaphors and emphasised how the members could connect to the issue of forcing the states to have Hindi inscription on milestones on the highway. Majority of the members agreed that the metaphors manifested Nehru's views, neglecting the crowd's.

The group members unanimously concluded that images of Nehru kept varying but could fall into two categories: one, that of being pathetic (emotional-helpless) and, the other, being a fighter (manager "Iron fists of Nehru"). They discussed the question as to who the real Nehru was. Is he just the poor guy desperate to hold on to the nation or the 'drill master' or the 'charmer'? Thus, three shades of Nehru as charismatic, dogmatic and melancholic have been represented by the cartoonist. Some of the metaphorical representations like that of bop bag were elitist in nature. Even without the context, metaphors taken from nature were more comprehensible. The members agreed that the cartoonist's representations were also binary in nature and had satirised the non-Hindi-speaking community. They also recognised that initially, the representations of the cartoonist towards the issue were dismissive. Most of the members experienced the metaphors to be negative and that the cartoonist had given a biased representation which was disappointing to them. But they also had a consensus that a context is needed to understand the cartoons. One of the members expressed her concern that a difference existed in the way people received the cartoons then from the way it is received now; moreover, the context played an important role in comprehending the metaphors. The rest of the members agreed to the fact that metaphors have a universal and communicative function making the effect long lasting and, thus, one could consider the need to study metaphors on how they have constructed the past of India.

## 7 Quantitative Analysis

A survey among 35 students was conducted. A set of five cartoons along with the questionnaire containing fifteen questions were distributed to measure the psychological impact and reception by the audience. A pre-questionnaire presentation was conducted to acquaint the students with the purpose of the survey, the concept of conceptual metaphors and the basis of selection of the cartoons. Questions were

mainly divided into three parts: those dealing with the essentiality of metaphors, then, perception regarding metaphors and finally, what the group felt when they perused the cartoons. The class comprised of 6 girls and 29 boys between 18 and 21 years and were from different states including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Pondicherry and New Delhi. Students were allotted 30 minutes to analyse the cartoons and respond. The data collected was skewed and checked for its reliability using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Later, it was analysed using three tools namely: frequencies, correlation and one-way ANOVA.

The key insights considering frequency responses are as follows:

(a) 85.7% (Almost Agree 42.9%, Agree 25.7% and Strongly Agree 17.1%) of the students supported the statement that metaphors are essential in political cartoons while 2.9% remained neutral. None of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

(b) 68.6% (Almost Agree 34.3% and Agree 34.3%) of them accepted that metaphors help them in grasping the situation while 2.9% remained inconclusive. On the whole, none of them disagreed that metaphors help in comprehension.

(c) 60.6% of them could relate to the metaphors. 14.3% responses were inconclusive.

(d) Though 11.4% disagreed with the statement, the majority (82.8%) of them also supported the fact that metaphors help in shaping their opinions.

(e) The question 'are the metaphors used in the cartoons ordinary?' had varied responses and 57.1% of them agreed, and 20% also disagreed with it. 17.1% could not decide. In the graphical representation, the relation to the metaphors and identification of metaphors as ordinary, overlap each other and justifies that majority of them could relate to the metaphors as they were recognisable. As the metaphors were conceptual, the audience could equate with the structures easily.

(f) Most of them (57.2%) also conceded that an understanding of the context is essential to grasp the metaphors in political cartoons. Out of which 22.9% strongly agreed with it. Around 23% also disagreed that there was a need for a context to understand the metaphors.

The graphical representation (Fig. 2) given below has recorded the percentage of responses to the questions regarding the metaphors in general.

(g) 51.5% disagreed (disagree moderately 22.9%, strongly disagree 11.4%) to the statement that the cartoonist has given an unbiased representation and 9% remained inconclusive. Around 40% stated that the presentation is unbiased, but majority received it as a biased presentation.

(h) When asked whether Mr. Nehru was targeted through the cartoons, 82.8% of them agreed to it and out of which 25.7% strongly felt that Nehru was being targeted through the cartoons. 2.9% remained indecisive, and very few disagreed.
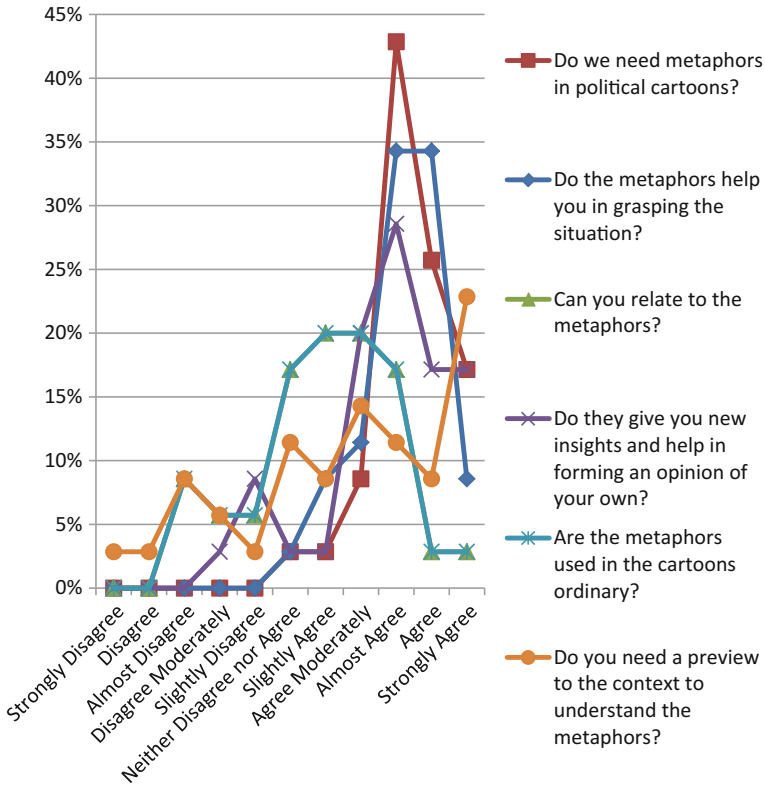
**Fig. 2** Metaphors in general

(i) 22.9% of them remained neutral to the question whether they could empathise with Nehru. Around 42.9% could sympathise with him, out of which 14.3% almost agreed to it. 34.3% disagreed and did not feel any kind of empathy towards Nehru. This response shows the iconographic value of metaphors which invokes empathy even as it provokes readers against Nehru.

(j) 68.5% of them conceded that the use of metaphors can exaggerate the factual knowledge, out of which 14.3% agreed moderately and 25.7% almost agreed. 14.3% could not decide, and a few (17.1%) disagreed with the statement.

The graph below represents the responses of the audience towards the metaphors present in the cartoons (Fig. 3).

(k) Among the questions that measured the feeling of the audience, the first one inquired about the artist's attitude towards the system; the majority (62.9%) of them felt the artist's attitude to be negative. This correlates with the statements
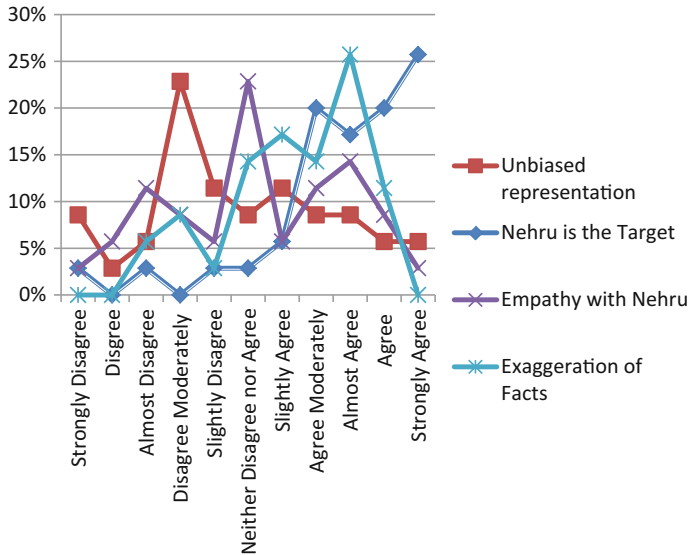
**Fig. 3** Perception of metaphors

of FGD members who identified the cartoonist to give a negative representation of the linguistic issue.

(l) Regarding the directionality of the metaphors, 57.2% felt it is negative. 14.3% remained indeterminate, and 28.6% admitted it to be positive. This again shows the relation between the cartoonist's ideation which can be either revolutionary or symbiotic. Depending on the inclination and ideation, the metaphors turn out to be positive or negative.

(m) 45.7% of the students felt a positive impact from the metaphors, and 37.2% had a negative feeling. 17.1% were ambiguous in their opinion. A mixed reaction proves the role of context in deciding the impact and the shaping of public opinion.

(n) To the question whether metaphors made them feel hurt or angry, the same majority (45.7%) who felt positive impact have remained neutral. In fact, one among them also commented that he was amused by the use of metaphors in the cartoons. But 40% were angry at some of the metaphors, and some of them were hurt by the metaphor's presence. This evinces the potentiality of metaphors to give a productive reception which makes the audience react as well as think (Fig. 4).

Using correlation tool, a bivariance analysis of the data was conducted. The results showed that the artist's attitude towards the system had a significant relation in determining the directionality ($p = 0.048$) and impact ($p = 0.006$) of metaphors. The need for context was also significantly correlated with the artist's attitude ($p = 0.016$) and impact of metaphors ($p = 0.037$). When variables were
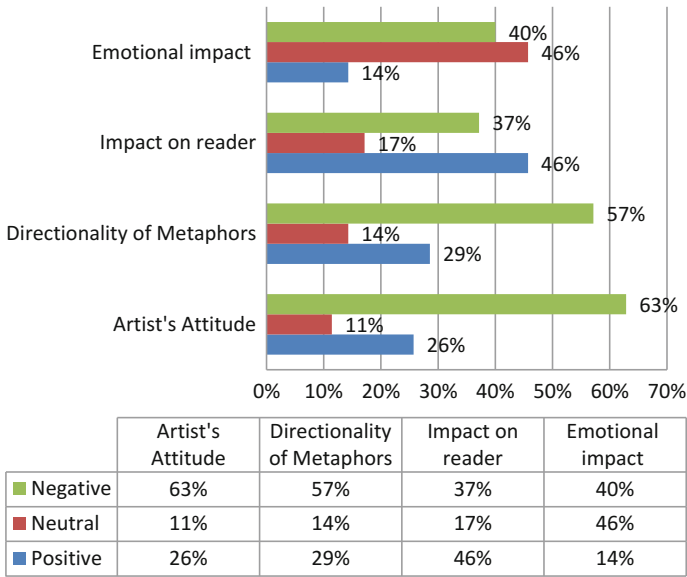
| | Artist's Attitude | Directionality of Metaphors | Impact on reader | Emotional impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Negative | 63% | 57% | 37% | 40% |
| ■ Neutral | 11% | 14% | 17% | 46% |
| ■ Positive | 26% | 29% | 46% | 14% |

**Fig. 4** Comparison of psychological impact

evaluated with the ANOVA tool, it revealed how there is a difference among the different states with respect to the emotional impact of metaphors ($p = 0.005$). The ANOVA analysis, thus, demonstrates how the impact of metaphors varies as the states differ.

From the above study, one can conclude that metaphors are essential in political discourse because they help in comprehending a situation. Though majority of the respondents were from different background and generation, they were able to relate to the metaphors. They also agreed that metaphors play a significant role in shaping opinion; and justifying the argument that metaphors are critical to building political iconography. Most of them considered the metaphors given as familiar because of which they could relate to them, proving the argument that conceptual metaphors are universal. But a majority of them also admitted that to understand metaphors in political cartoons contextual knowledge is a prerequisite. This also points to the fact that in the study of political iconography, understanding situations and contexts is necessary to decode the images. In general, the group felt that the cartoonist has given a biased representation, making them empathise with Nehru which demonstrates how metaphors build a political icon and memory. The audience response also validates the statement that employing metaphors can exaggerate the factual knowledge, which again hints at the power of conceptual metaphors to create a reality of their own. Most of them felt that the artist's attitude towards the system is negative and has used negative metaphors. This in turn has a negative influence on the audience reception. 40% of them ended up feeling agitated as the artist had been successful in provoking the reader's minds through the metaphors. This manifests the psychological potential of metaphors.

## 8  Colonial Framework of Conceptual Metaphors

As stated earlier, conceptual metaphors become the frames of thinking and plat-
forms for comparison. The way a metaphor forms depends on experiential gestalt as
one brings comparisons by linking situations with the objects one is familiar, this in
turn depends on the context and environment that surround us. Considering this
argument, the pattern delineated from the conceptual metaphors is found to be
colonial. Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* (1927) a vituperative book which saw
India's condition as a festering disease (Teed, 2003) and undeserving of self -rule,
presented India as a parasite that can be governed only by the British Raj. The
metaphor of considering the nation as a disease and the crown as the doctor who
can redress suffering is colonial in the constitution. It shows the colonial master as
the responsible leader whose duty is to 'civilise' the savage.

Similarly, the broad division of conceptual metaphors into teacher–student,
tamer and the tamed, scrounger and the recalcitrant is constituted as binaries. This
duality can be traced back to the colonial discourse which provided thinking frames
of dualities: 'self versus other'; 'us versus them'; 'coloniser versus colonised';
'mother versus child'; 'black versus white'; and finally, 'inferior versus superior'
(Ochoa, 1996, p. 221). As Frantz Fanon remarks in *The Wretched of the Earth*, 'the
militant who faces the colonialist war machine with the bare minimum of arms
realizes that while he is breaking down colonial oppression he [is] building up
automatically yet another system of exploitation' (qtd. in Ochoa, 1996, p. 223),
where the new regime having internalised colonial binaries thinks in terms of North
vs. South, centre vs. state and the Hindi vs. non-Hindi. When India achieved
independence a decentralisation happened, which was again followed by a 'new
system of exploitation … based on the dynamics of revolutionary ideology, which
frequently creates the illusion that the independence movement is now "the one" in
relationship to other political forces within a (former) colony; as the new dominant
centre it has the power to define "others" and to marginalize those who do not
reflect the ideals of the revolution' (Ochoa, 1996, p. 223). This same thinking
pattern has been presented through the conceptual metaphors in the political car-
toons. The demand for linguistic states was revolutionary in character, and there
were many attempts from the centre to suppress the issue. This explains the
provenance of metaphors of 'the tamer' and 'the tamed' where the linguistic issue is
shown as an animal (tiger, dog, bull and snake) or a genie that has to be tamed by
Nehru who acts as a trickster, circus master, charmer and the bullfighter. The
conceptual metaphors in the political cartoons execute the colonial function of
hegemonising the divided parts and give them a centripetality. The metaphors also
act as catalysts in internalising the colonial values, such as the centre, that is
working hard to integrate the nation. This is evident in the cartoon where Mr. Nehru
builds a single house while the rest try to build single rooms. Metaphors also
become the tools for hegemony and internalisation of the colonial values which

gradually helps in constructing an image of the political and bureaucratic system. The negative reception from the audience hints at the recognition of the colonial frameworks. But the neutral stature of the readers also suggests the impending power of metaphors which can beguile them.

# 9    Conclusion

The paper studies the psychological impact of conceptual metaphors in political cartoons and their role in making political iconography. Through the quantitative and qualitative analysis, one can come to the conclusion that conceptual metaphors form an inevitable phase of political iconography and they are successful in generating emotional responses. There are two stages involved in cognition of metaphors. In the stage of metaphorical application, depending on the inclination of the cartoonist, metaphors may be either revolutionary or symbiotic. The stage of activation of metaphors happens depending on the context in which they are created and the environment that surrounds the audience. One concludes that context is a prerequisite in order to comprehend metaphors in relation to political iconography. India as a nascent country, immediately after achieving independence, had the grains of colonial thought deeply embedded in her psyche. The political events are hence interpreted by the cartoonist in the colonial framework. Years later, the metaphors ring with the same colonial resonance which generates a negative reception from the audience. In this particular study, the metaphors used by the cartoonist were identified to be negative, and the response to them was also negative proving how psychological reactance is dependent on the directionality of metaphors. The study of conceptual metaphors on the whole looks at the representational politics through language, which is why the study becomes relevant in the field of political iconography. As this is a pilot study based on the responses of students, it can be extended to the reading public that receives political iconography through newspapers. To tap the authentic response, the study must be carried out among the public who had witnessed a particular issue in its historical frame (in this case, the demand for linguistic states). A factorial analysis can also be conducted to analyse which factor contributes the most. Thus, the scope of the study can be further expanded by reaching out to the public.

# References

Bilsky, M. (1952). I. A. Richards' theory of metaphor. *Modern Philology, 50*(2), 130–137. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/435560.

Bounegru, L., & Forceville, C. (2011). Metaphors in editorial cartoons representing global financial crisis. *Visual Communication, 10*(2), 209–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357211398446.

Bourke, J. (2014). *The story of pain: From prayer to painkillers*. U.S.A: OUP Oxford.

Camp, E., & Reimer, M. (2006). Metaphor. In *The oxford handbook of philosophy of language* (pp. 845–863). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chandra, B., Mukherjee, A., & Mukherjee, M. (2008). *India since independence*. New Delhi: Penguin.

Coleman, R., & Wu, D. (2015). *Image and emotion in voter decisions: The affect agenda*. London: Lexington Books.

El Refaie, E. (2003). Understanding visual metaphor: The example of newspaper cartoons. *Visual Communication, 2*(1), 75–95.

Forceville, C., & Urios-Aparisi, E. (2009). *Multimodal metaphor*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Goatly, A. (2007). *Washing the brain: Metaphor and hidden ideology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Graham, D., & Bachmann, T. T. (2004). *Ideation: The birth and death of ideas*. New Jersey: Wiley.

Jr, Gibbs, & Raymond, W. (2011). Evaluating conceptual metaphor theory. *Discourse Processes, 48*(8), 529–562. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2011.606103.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh*. New York: Basic Books.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by* (2nd ed.). U.S.A: University of Chicago press.

Marín-Arrese, J. I. (2008). Cognition and culture in political cartoons. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 5*(1), 1–18. Retrieved from www.academia.edu/1048810/Cognition_and_culture_in_political_cartoons.

Memmi, A. (2013). *The colonizer and the colonized*. UK: Routledge.

Mio, J. S. (1997). Metaphor and politics. *Metaphor and Symbol, 12*(2), 113–133.

Negro, I. (2013).Visual Metaphor and metonymy in french political cartoons. *RESLA, 26*, 365–384. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287473347_Visual_metaphor_and_metonymy_in_French_political_cartoons.

Ochoa, P. (1996). The Historical moments of postcolonial writing: Beyond colonialism's binary. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, 15*(2), 221–229. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4149209.

Ortony, A. (1993). *Metaphor and thought*. U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Ortony, A., Reynolds, R. E., & Arter, J. (1978). Metaphor: Theoretical and empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin, 85*(5), 919–943.

Ottati, V., Renstrom, R., & Price, E. (2014). The metaphorical framing model: Political communication and public opinion. In M. Landau, M. D. Robinson & B. P. Meier (Eds.), *The power of metaphor: Examining its influence on social life* (viii, 179–202, 301 pp). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Russo, J. P. (2015). *IA richards (routledge revivals): His life and work*. New York: Routledge.

Shankar, K. (1983). `*Don't spare me shankar*". New Delhi: Children's Book Trust.

Spielvogel, J. J. (2009). *Western civilization: A brief history*. USA: Cengage.

Teed, P. (2003). Race against memory: Katherine mayo, jabez sunderland, and Indian independence. *American Studies*, *44*(1/2), 35–57. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40643432.

Thibodeau, P. H., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning. *PloS ONE, 6*(2), 1–11. Retrieved from lera.ucsd.edu/papers/crime-metaphors.pdf.

Van Straten, R. (1994). *An introduction to iconography* (pp. 151). Trans. Patricia De Man. Netherlands: Gordon and Breach Science.

Watson, J., & Hill, A. (2015). *Dictionary of media and communication studies*. USA: Bloomsbury Publishing.