

Presidential metaphors during the 2019 Chilean social outbreak

Metáforas presidenciales durante el estallido social chileno

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Abstract

In October 2019, a series of protests took place throughout Chile. The aim of this paper is to describe the metaphors emitted by the president of Chile, Sebastián Piñera, in his speeches made between October 18 and 25, in the context of Chile's "Social Outbreak". The metaphors were identified and analyzed from the approach of the dynamics of discourse applied to the metaphor. Metaphors related to: Social Agenda, States of Emergency, Manifestations and Needs of the Population were identified. It is observed that the President during the first week of the social outbreak sees the protests as obstacles in the "pathway" of the country's development; here the "war against a powerful enemy" stands out as the great obstacle to be defeated and where he must guide the population towards development through the Social Agenda, protecting what is "built" throughout Chilean history.

Keywords: discourse analysis, Chile, presidential speeches, social outbreak, conceptual metaphor.

Resumen

En octubre del 2019 ocurrieron una serie de manifestaciones a lo largo de Chile. El objetivo de este artículo es describir las metáforas emitidas por el presidente de Chile, Sebastián Piñera, en sus discursos realizados entre el 18 y 25 de octubre, en contexto del "Estallido Social" de Chile. Las metáforas fueron identificadas y analizadas desde el enfoque de la dinámica del discurso aplicado a la metáfora. Se identificaron metáforas vinculadas a: Agenda Social, Estados de Emergencia, Manifestaciones y Necesidades de la Población. Se observa que el Presidente durante la primera semana del estallido social ve las manifestaciones como obstáculos en el "camino" del desarrollo del país; aquí, destaca la "guerra contra un enemigo poderoso" planteado como el gran obstáculo a ser derrotado y donde él debe guiar a la población hacia el desarrollo por medio de la Agenda Social, protegiendo lo "construido" a lo largo de la historia chilena.

Palabras clave: análisis del discurso, Chile, discursos presidenciales, estallido social, metáfora conceptual.

1. Introduction

Conceptual metaphor is part of cognitive linguistics, where the metaphor is not used as a literary figure, but rather as a form of describing ideas or experiences that are difficult to express in more specific terms, preferring the use of common language (Escandell, 2007; Landau, Robinson & Meier, 2014; Seung, Park & Jung, 2015; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006). They are prominent in the discourse of those who express moving experiences and/or abstract thoughts, given that they allow the user to effectively transmit said messages (Gibbs, 2008). Considering that the metaphor influences our thoughts and actions, it is seen as an element of great importance in political discourse, clarifying complex concepts, in addition to being a tool of persuasion (Penninck, 2014). The metaphor is considered the most efficient construct when conveying a political message (Digonnet, 2014).

In October 2019, the so-called “Estallido Social” broke out in Chile—the term itself a metaphoric expression—triggered by a 30-peso fare increase for the Santiago subway system (Agencia AFP, 2019; Paúl, 2019). This led to organized en masse ticket evasion and later protests, after which a state of emergency was declared in various regions throughout the country (Paúl, 2019). During that first week, there was a number of clashes, with protesters setting fire and vandalizing subway infrastructure, forcing stations to close. These events were closely followed by mass protests that led to confrontation with police forces, the enactment of a curfew in the largest cities and the militarization of the outbreak based on discourse and deployment of military forces in the streets. That week ended with even larger protests and a general strike throughout the country unswayed by the social measures offered by the executive branch (Agencia AFP, 2019).

Starting October 18th, the President of the Republic, Sebastián Piñera, gave several public speeches from the Palacio de la Moneda¹, broadcast live on national television. The situation was seen as chaotic, with protesting throughout the country lasting several weeks (Agencia AFP, 2019). This led to debate with comment and public opinion proffered by the country’s various political parties (Reyes, 2019), as well as the academic sector, the

latter indicating the main problem being inequality as the origin of the discontent and the consequent demand for solutions on behalf of the population (Sepúlveda, 2019). However, after a period of several months, there is still no clear cause of what led to the outbreak; inequality continues to be a main element, to which is added the abuse and impunity of the social elite, ineffective institutions which prioritize economic profitability over wellbeing, and the abandonment of the State in terms of guaranteeing basic rights; all of which have produced a series of unsatisfied demands in terms of the country’s economic, political, and environmental needs, symbolic situation, among other aspects (Güell, 2019). It is in this social outbreak “in progress”, “in transit” or “under study” that, one of the few certainties is that constitutional change (also “in progress”) constitutes a necessary exercise, in the broadest sense of the word (civic, legal, social, discursive, participative, etc.), to begin solving the problems that caused the outbreak (Leiva, 2020).

Metaphors are linguistic resources used by speakers to capably respond to current events on a national scale (Valida, 2015). Their analysis can discern the attitudes and thoughts of those who express them and based on the previous, the objective of this study is to describe the metaphors used by the President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera, in his speeches given between October 18 and 25, in the context of Chile’s “Estallido Social”. Multiple articles have referred to this entire process as a social revolt (Bauerle, 2019; Navarro & Tromben, 2019) or social uprising (Rajevic, 2020; Márquez, Pérez & Rodríguez, 2020), which clearly has a different connotation when seen from the very same metaphorical plane. In this case we will refer to the process as a social outbreak to use the term most frequently used in different media to prevent branching off into analysis that would distract from the proposed objective.

This article is structured in a section of theoretical framework that addresses a characterization of the conceptual metaphor and its use in political discourse, followed by the methodology based on the procedure proposed by the Pragglez Group (2007) and Cameron (2007). The results are organized into the four topics identified in the analyzed presidential discourses, and closes with discussion and conclusions.

2. Theoretical Framework

The conceptual metaphor arises from cognitive linguistics, in contrast to the metaphor as a literary figure that has been studied throughout history (Ekaterina, 2016). From the conceptual perspective, metaphors are fundamental in the production of thought and language, reason for which they are crucial in communication (Deignan, 2005). This is opposite to what happens in the vision of the metaphor as literary figure, where the metaphor is a simple, ornamental discursive resource (Lesz, 2011). From that perspective, the conceptual metaphor can be defined as that which describes an experience or idea that is difficult to express in more specific terms, given its abstract nature (Escandell, 2007; Landau *et al.*, 2014; Seung *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the metaphor allows facilitates the comprehension of a conceptual domain based on another concept of greater understanding for the speaker (Sharifian in Xu & Sharifian, 2017).

In the context of presidential discourses, the metaphor is revealed due to the power that language has within politics, being found in the large majority of political discourses (Borčić, Kanižaj & Kršul, 2016). This is due to the fact that metaphors have the ability to impact and influence public opinion, modifying people's view of the world, and are therefore considered as useful tools in politics (Penninck, 2014). In this context, metaphors often fall into determined conceptual aspects like war, illnesses, machinery, construction, trips, sports, among other things (Borčić *et al.*, 2016; Ekaterina, 2016).

Based on research by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), studies on metaphors typically do not clarify the process of identifying and selecting metaphors. Therefore, cognitive linguists have multiple ways of interpreting and characterizing different metaphoric expressions they find (Penninck, 2014). This led to abundant criticism, given that metaphors are identified without an explanation of the criteria used by the research team (Seung *et al.*, 2015). As a result, the Metaphor Identification Procedure [MIP] (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) and Cameron's proposal (2007) on the application of discourse dynamics on the metaphor, metaphors

in different discourses can be identified clearly and explicitly.

Cameron's proposal, the systematic metaphor, is built within the framework of discourse dynamics in which the metaphor has aspects that are simultaneously linguistic, affective, sociocultural and cognitive (Cameron, 2007). Therefore, metaphors portray the thoughts and the perspectives of the speakers, and adapt to every interaction (Alarcón, 2019; Cameron, 2008). As a result, metaphors allow for the creation of new conceptualization based on the dialogic discourse, while at the same time facilitating the structuring of mental representations (Alarcón, 2019; Cameron, 2008; Cameron *et al.*, 2009; Castillo, 2019). This is due to the fact that metaphors aid in connecting ideas from multiple systems of thought and the use of language of those who use them (Cameron *et al.*, 2009), in addition to being based on mental constructs that involve integrated multiple elements (Fauconnier & Turner, 2008).

In the case of Chile's social outbreak, Navarro and Tromben (2019) published an analysis of the presidential discourses during and prior to the period of protests. Said analysis presents a wide scope of political discourse, including: lexical decisions, collocations, binary opposites, key words, assessments, discursive themes, metaphors, intertextuality and discursive strategies. They show a discursivity that progresses from a comfortable technocratic position supported by efficiency of the State, which is later revealed as false, to a known stance of "war against a powerful enemy", criminalizing protesters in practical and symbolic terms. It later finalizes in a position of solidarity towards the demands of the people, something that has only increased distrust of the elites who are demonstrably disconnected from the reality of the majority of Chileans.

As described by Navarro and Tromben (2019), discourse has an effect on a social, cognitive, moral and material level. In the case of the political discourse in situations of crisis and instability, these effects are wielded more intensely, especially when these discourses are broadcast on national TV and from an asymmetric position of power, always framed by democratic yet hypertrophic presidentialism (Leiva, 2020).

3. Methodological Framework

The present study was undertaken from a qualitative perspective, and was exploratory due to the lack of research addressing discourse from the recent social unrest in Chile. The corpus is comprised of presidential speeches chosen via criterion sampling (Mejía, 2000). In this case, the main classification criterion was that the speech was given by President Sebastián Piñera on national TV, between October 18 and 25, 2019, including both the start and end dates, given that it was the first week of the social unrest. A total of seven speeches were selected, found on the Presidential Press official website (Government of Chile, 2019), transcriptions 729 to 1509 words long. Sebastián Piñera is a right-wing politician and Chilean businessman and one of the country's top five richest people. He has been a senator (1990-1998) and president of the Renovación Nacional Party (2000-2004), and was elected President of the Republic twice (2010-2014 and 2018-2022) (Government of Chile, 2010).

As a first step, the selected speeches were read in their entirety, and then were scanned for metaphors using the discourse dynamics framework (Cameron, 2007). For the definition of a metaphor, each lexical item is contrasted juxtaposing contextual meaning and dictionary definition, based on the procedure proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007). The dictionary used for contrasting is the Diccionario de la Lengua Española (Real Academia Española [RAE], 2018).

Lexical units were labeled as metaphoric expressions upon finding a difference between the contextual meaning of a lexical unit, and its simplest contemporary dictionary meaning, as long as the contextual meaning can be understood based on the simplest meaning (Alarcón, Díaz & Vásquez, 2018). According to the methodology proposed by Cameron (2007), the lexical unit whose simplest meaning contrasted with the contextual meaning of the discourse was named the vehicle. After determining all the vehicles, they were grouped according to their semantic categories and similarities in meaning. In addition, vehicles were associated with key terms or topics, established according to the research project objectives. This

procedure was performed by both authors, in which discoveries were contrasted, giving more credibility to the results. We note that the conclusions truly emerged from the data and are not defined *a priori*. An analysis of the paraverbal language was not included given that it would imply adding adjectives to tone, positions, intensities and other characteristics that are not specifically expressed by the speaker, but rather recognized by the receiver, which exceeds the scope of the procedure proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007).

4. Results

In total, 179 metaphoric vehicles were identified and grouped according to semantic similarity. In this article, there are 9 reported vehicle groups that present over 5 metaphors, these were: Movement (25), Verticality (16), Road (15), Construction (13), War (10), Vision (9), Seriousness (8), Voice (8) and Size (7). In terms of speech content, 4 topics were identified, corresponding to: Social Agenda, States of Emergency, Protests, and Needs of the Population.

4.1 Social Agenda

Social Agenda appears in the fifth speech analyzed, dated October 23rd. In this speech, President Piñera announces a Social Agenda proposal, with which they hope to respond to the needs of the population; the proposal is built on pensions, increasing minimum wage, capping the cost of electricity, better health benefits, legal aid for crime victims, and new taxes for those with high income.

By using construction metaphors, the President referred to the contents of the Social Agenda as "the main pillars of this Agenda", expression with which he portrays the Social Agenda as a building, supported by its content. Piñera says "on Tuesday I announced to the country the pillars of the New Social Agenda".

Only one war metaphor was found, in which there is talk of "an intense struggle to lower prices of medicines". Metaphors of movement refer to

movement on a horizontal axis on which you can advance or return. These are the most numerous metaphors throughout the total number of speeches, and this is also true within the topic of Social Agenda. Of the six metaphors, four belong to the domain of push (“... we will continue pushing administrative measures...”; “... to be able to push this initiative...”; “so that all of us together can push this Social Agenda...”), where the measures of the Social Agenda are considered to be positive, and therefore “are worth moving forward on”, with the understanding that what is being carried forward is what is being implemented. Hence, the objective of the Social Agenda is seen as “moving our country ahead”.

Metaphors referring to verticality are those that refer to the existence of an up and a down, and to the movement of certain elements on that axis. Those found in the context of the Social Agenda mainly refer to the highs and lows. Therefore, there is reference to “high income sectors” and of “higher salaries”, with which high is linked to the idea of great amounts. On the contrary, there are expressions referring to “very low pensions”, and to the “intense struggle to lower the prices of medicines”, objectives of the Social Agenda.

The metaphors of vision include all those associated to sense of sight and visual perception. In this way, President Piñera announces that “the [Social Agenda] Project considers the government doing something it has never done” where that consideration is not the act of seeing, but rather in reference to the content of the project. On the other hand, there is talk of a “clear sense of urgency”, and how “we have heard loud and clear” the demands of the people of Chile. Therefore, clarity is associated with what is understood and evident, given that it is easier to observe.

Metaphors of voice are those which speak of a voice, but which is not the real voice of a person or a group of persons. In the “Public Agenda” topic, there is only one metaphor of voice, which appears in the phrase “... we have heard, loud and clear, the voice of the people expressing their problems peacefully...”.

4.2 States of Emergency

After several days of protests in the context of the social outbreak, President Piñera declared a State of Emergency on October 18, which lasted over a week in various regions throughout the country. The topic in question emerged from the second speech analyzed, dated October 19th.

The metaphors of movement refer to the influence of the State of Emergency in the country’s process of “normalization”. It is said that, from the government, they are “...making our best efforts to move towards a normalization...”, and that “we need to advance in being able to guarantee public order”. In these metaphors, advancing implies something positive. It is also said that “this normalization is already underway...”, with which they reiterate the notion that being metaphorically in movement, advancing, means making progress on determined issues.

In terms of metaphors of size, these refer to both the particular size of an element, as well as references to variation in size. In the speeches, it is said that States of Emergency were extended (“we have extended it to the Region of Antofagasta”; “later we extended it to the Regions of Valparaíso and Biobío...”), changing its size, although it refers to an increase in the physical extension of the State of Emergency in different regions.

The three metaphors found referring to verticality refer to the process of “lifting” the states of emergency: “... we all want to lift the states of emergency...”; “lifting the states of emergency...”; “... means to go about reducing and lifting curfews...”. For their duration states of emergency are placed over and down on the country, and must be lifted in order for them to cease.

4.3 Protests

The social outbreak begins with a series of protests, from Santiago subway ticket evasion, to marches, barricades and clashes with national police. Allusions to this topic are found in all of speeches analyzed. The notion of a road from a metaphoric language standpoint, is seen as the way in which one “arrives” to determined results. The roads will

come to be metaphors of life itself, and for this reason President Piñera announces he hopes to “be able to return as soon as possible, all together, to the roads to the future...”. There is also talk about the existence of elements that “in a certain way are facilitating the road of those want to destroy our democracy”, and how these people are “destroying everything that stands in their way”. Therefore, Piñera says that the people who carry out violent protests destroy all the obstacles in their path, and as a country they must return to “the roads of the future”, expression used on two occasions that alludes to the country being “stopped” on the road while protests last.

President Piñera’s speeches contain metaphors of construction related to the actions of build, destroy and repair. In the case of destroy, it refers to how the protesters are “destroying” democracy and the people’s dreams (“in a certain way they are making the road easy for those who want to destroy our democracy”; “they destroy property and dreams...”). This is linked directly to the metaphors of build, all referring to what is built by Chilean society “as that with such effort we have built as Chileans ...”; “our state of law and all that with such effort we have built”, “works that we have built together with great effort ...”). As you can see, the building was done together by all the country, and it has not been easy to build, but rather has required the efforts of all participants. This formula is repeated in three different speeches. Finally, in the case of “repair”, the metaphor is addressed as an objective on behalf of the government, to “repair not only the physical damage, but rather also the moral damage” caused by protesters.

In the metaphors of seriousness, there are the phrases that allude to “serious acts of violence”, the “serious attacks against public order” and the “serious and repeated attacks”, which refer to part of the protests which took place during the week in which analyzed speeches were given. In addition, the protests “have seriously affected freedom of movement” and “have seriously upset public order”. There is even talk about “serious crime” and that there are people who “have committed those serious criminal acts”.

In the speech made October 20th, President Piñera declares: “We are at war with a powerful enemy”.

Throughout said speech, on the topic of protests, metaphors associated to war were used five different times. It is said that those who protest violently “are at war with all Chileans ...”, resulting in President Piñera declaring: “I’m calling all my fellow countrymen to unite in this fight against violence”; “I am asking all my fellow countrymen to unite in this battle we cannot lose”. In this speech, via this metaphor, President Piñera establishes a war between protesters identified as violent, and the country as a nation. Previously, a metaphor grouped in the same category had been used in the October 18th speech (“the people that have committed those serious criminal acts will face justice”). After the October 20th speech, it is used only once in the last speech analyzed, on October 25th, “our administration will continue fighting with all the tools our democracy gives us”.

Within the topic of protests, three metaphors of movement are used. The first refers to “... Chile has always known how to win through”, and it is related to the phrase that says “only united will we be able to leave behind and overcome these problems and these shortfalls”. Chile’s situation in the protests is seen as negative, something that must be overcome, in order to “get ahead”. This is related to the metaphors of road. On the other hand, they announce the existence of “lawsuits that pursue the objective”, with which the lawsuits are personified, giving them the ability to move to pursue things or objectives.

In the metaphors of size, abstract elements are characterized as if they had the ability to change sizes. Thus, there is mention of the “great pain that many Chileans feel”, the “enormous effort to normalize the situation” and the “gigantic effort to make tomorrow a day as normal as possible”. Another example is found in “the Firefighters of Chile who have had the titanic task of putting out fires”.

There are only two sentences with metaphors of verticality within the topic of protests, in both cases referring to depth, which is to say, what is found underneath. It is indicated that: “The objective of this State of Emergency is very simple, but very profound”, and that President Piñera wants to “express” his “profound appreciation and recognition”.

4.4 Needs of the Population

This topic refers to the needs, demands and petitions of the people of Chile, which motivated the protests that exploded into a social outbreak. These are the needs that motivated the Social Agenda proposed by the government, whose metaphors were presented earlier.

In the metaphors of road associated to the topic of needs of the population, the President indicates that “we have a long way to go, and that we have to travel it together”. To respond to the needs of the population, they have to travel, along the same road, the government and the population. The process will not be fast nor will the changes be immediate, reason for which it is perceived as a long road to travel. There is also a metaphor identified in sentences like “make their dreams come true, it is our destination, the main destination that guides each one of the actions” and “motivations that have guided and inspired our administration/government”. The needs of Chile’s population play the role of guides along the road that government and citizens must travel. Finally, when speaking of a president’s duty, Piñera announces that “it also includes opening wide the roads to dialogue, collaboration, good will and agreements”. It is seen as the responsibility of the executive branch to provide the conditions that lead to instances of dialogue and so forth in order to solve the needs of the Chilean population.

In metaphors of construction, after recognizing the needs of the people, President Piñera begins to speak about “the building of a Great National Agreement”, thanking the citizen organizations, civil society and municipal representatives and congressmen for “their valuable contribution and constructive attitude”. He adds that responding to the needs of Chile’s population is how “democracies are built”. The proposals, therefore, are equivalent to works of construction carried out by various parties, and the external opinions are constructive, which is to say, that they can change what is already in place.

On the topic of needs of the population, there are two metaphors grouped in the category of war metaphors. The first refers to the priorities of the government, expressed as “focused on fighting

crime”. Therefore, there are two opposite sides at war, crime and the government. Also, there is talk of the proposals “to face and overcome this difficult situation”, where the government will strive to provide solutions to the needs of the population, and thus return to normalcy. These are previous to the speech on October 20th.

In terms of movement, the first metaphoric expression corresponds to “now is the time to make up for lost time, pick up the pace and take action, and urgently...”. Government measures to solve the needs of the people are seen as a movement that must be accelerated, to get quick solutions. This is linked to the metaphors of advance (“... Chile is going to be able to continue advancing...”; “We have to be united to advance towards a freer Chile”), which is seen as something positive for the country’s reality. There are also the push metaphors (“continue pushing...”; “what allows us to push, and urgently”), where it is seen that the needs are resolved via proposals that drive movement.

Within the topic of needs of the population, the metaphors of verticality refer to monetary aspects within the detected needs and petitions. They depict a “high cost of living”, which is to say that a large amount of monetary resources is required in order to be able to afford to live well. On the other hand, there is a need for a “decrease in the cost of medicines” and “a decrease in the price and guarantee of our health systems”.

Just as in the previous topics, metaphors of vision associate clarity with what is understandable, comprehensible and evident (“... we have heard the voice of the people loud and clear...”; “... we have received with humbleness and clarity the message the Chilean people have sent us ...”). In addition, President Piñera recognized his political blindness: “I recognize and ask forgiveness for this lack of vision ...”, where the word vision refers to understanding and anticipating the needs of the population. There is also the last sentence which says “it has to do with the public transportation system ...”, expression used to allude to an issue related to what was spoken about previously.

In relation to voice, President Piñera on various occasions uses the expression “hear the voice” of the

men and women of Chile. With “hear the voice”, he is not referring to hearing the individual voices of each person, but rather acknowledging his understanding of the petitions and real needs of the different sectors. Piñera acclaimed: “My God is it important to listen to the voice of the social leaders!” and “We have listened humbly, attentively, committedly, the voice, to the powerful voice of the people”.

5. Discussion

In the speeches of President Piñera, four main issues were addressed via metaphors. These are the Social Agenda, States of Emergency, the Protests and the Needs of the Population. Worthy of note are the several groups of vehicles found in these speeches that correspond to those determined as common in other similar studies (Borčić *et al.*, 2016; Ekaterina, 2016).

The Social Agenda refers to the proposals made by the government on October 23rd to respond to the needs of the population. The axes or “pillars” of this agenda are pensions, minimum wage, the cost of electricity, health benefits, legal aid for crime victims and taxes on higher incomes. These measures seek to “alleviate”, given that they will “wrestle” with the main problems that affect those protesting. In order to solve the problems, the Social Agenda must “move” and “advance”, to even the field for those who have “high and low” income. After almost a year since the social outbreak, some of these proposals are still pending, including the holding of the constitutional plebiscite (Fuentes, 2020) which was approved by a wide majority on October 25th, 2020.

Shortly after giving the first speech analyzed in this study, President Piñera declared a state of emergency in various areas of the country, which lasted the entire week. These states of emergency are in response to the protests that affected normal daily life. Therefore, they seek to “advance” towards normalization in order to “lift” the states of emergency. Emphasis is given to the “violence” towards material goods, without mentioning the possible causes for the carrying out of said actions. It is seen, from his perspective, that the

protests are an obstacle in day to day life and must end in order for the country to return to normal.

On the other hand, there are the manifestations, consisting of peaceful and violent marches, subway fare evasions, *cacerolazos*, among other forms of protest. From the government, the protests are seen as a standstill on the preordained “road”, affecting everything built by Chilean society. It is considered that in the context of the protests, serious actions have been perpetrated, resulting in the declaration that the country is “at war”. Via this metaphor, they immediately define the existence of at least two opposing forces, with the President requesting help in the “battle”. According to Dignonnet (2014), war metaphors in political speeches serve to represent the power to attack, not to defend, and therefore it is inferred that this speech seeks to emphasize the government’s capability to respond. This is consistent with that proposed by Navarro and Tromben (2019), in terms of the president’s discursive evolution prior to the protests, where technocratic efficiency was shown as a main quality of President Piñera’s administration.

The continuous use of metaphors of war in the speech of October 20th led the protesters to appropriate the word via the motto “we are not at war”, documented even in international media (BBC Mundo, 2019), giving new power to the movement that the central government was trying to stop. The use of war metaphors is discontinued in later speeches and turns toward a discourse centered on solidarity with protesters and their demands (Navarro & Tromben, 2019). In this sense, even when the war metaphor is preponderant in the analysis, the central metaphor of presidential speeches is the road-construction tandem found in the promise of the Social Agenda and where the war is shown as a reactionary response, a tool used to preserve what has been built. Therefore, over and over again we see that the country must “get ahead” and “advance”, to “leave behind” all the problems associated with the protests. While on the topic of the needs of the people, there is the added fact that there is still “road left to travel” for the government and the Chilean population together, converting the needs of the population into “roadmaps”. According to President, by satisfying their needs, the people can have a fuller, happier life with fewer deprivations.

The country's development is reflected as a road in President Piñera's speeches, road which must be travelled, and on which there are multiple constructions, material and immaterial, that allow for the existence of our society as we know it today. Construction is a widely used metaphor in political discourses (Chilton & Ilyin, 1993), as a process that carried out via collective power and effort (Digonnet, 2014). Having these constructions allows society to approach fulfillment, which is seen as success. According to this, the President's role is as a guide along this road, and therefore must stop advances by those who obstruct the *status quo*. The declaration of war is explained, therefore, as a measure to protect this vision, that of the road-construction.

6. Conclusions

By analyzing the metaphors used in speeches, we can observe that during the first week of the social outbreak, the president saw the protests as obstacles on the road to development; here he speaks of the "war against a powerful enemy" proposed as the great obstacle to be defeated. Therefore, from his standpoint, he should guide the population towards development by way of the Social Agenda, protecting what "has been built" throughout Chile's history. This materializes as a maintaining of the *status quo* mainly from the economic standpoint, and from the political standpoint.

Although the speech by President Piñera, after the first week, changes tone to show more empathy to protesters, the analysis of the conceptual metaphors in his speeches from the first week allow us to more accurately characterize his political vision and the "road" along which he as president feels called to guide the country. In this sense, beyond the attractiveness of war metaphors, the main metaphor in the presidential speeches given the first

week is that of the road-construction tandem.

In a broader sense, the presidential response – characterized by the conceptual metaphor in this study – has begun a process of response to social demands centered on the profound and far-reaching inequality that characterizes Chilean society. A year after the outbreak and consequential partisan agreement for constitutional change, it is interesting that the same power groups in various areas insist on leading changes that they, whether by action or omission, have opposed ever since the return of democracy. In this context, it will be interesting to continue analyzing, from the conceptual metaphor, how the various traditional and emerging political powers build discourses that tend toward the materialization of the changes that Chilean society demands.

In terms of this study's limitations, we must consider that metaphors require a common context between emitter and receptor in order to be understood (Pennick, 2014), the reason we consider useful comparing similar analyses. In addition, the speeches studied herein only correspond to the first week of the social outbreak, that is, they only address the President Piñera's initial response, and therefore, must not be understood as the entire strategy of the government's response to the situation. More similar studies should be performed on a medium and long-term basis in order to provide a better understanding of this phenomenon, in the expectation that it will be a long ongoing process while waiting for a decision on a new constitution for the country, and considering that the current pandemic will have a profound impact on the factor recognized as the main cause of the social outbreak: inequality.

Notes

1. Government seat and office of the President of Chile.

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