

A emergência climática é uma guerra ou estamos descolonizando o sistema? O enquadramento de metáforas conceituais no discurso da emergência climática

Is climate emergency a war or are we uprooting the system? Framing conceptual metaphors in the climate emergency discourse

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ABSTRACT: The visible worldwide consequences of climate change have triggered countless public debates among scientific communities from several knowledge areas, raising public awareness to this issue. Rhetoric and discourse strategies have played a crucial role on how global warming cannot be ignored, thereby instigating policymakers to implement urgent action to reduce CO² emissions and other causes of environment degradation. Thus, the present paper aims at dissecting a brief corpus of Instagram posts from two renowned environmental activist entities, the NGO *Fridays for Future* and *Greta Thunberg*, with the purpose of identifying new metaphorical representations in the multimodal youth climate activism, alongside with other social aspects involved in this rhetoric. For that goal we chose the hashtag *#Uprootthesystem*, currently adopted by some environmental activists who believe that the climate crisis narrative makes room for other historical reparation discourses, arguing against colonization, poverty, discrimination, racism, class inequality, climate injustice, among others.

INTRODUCTION

It is known that the global warming problematic is complex and abstract, therefore, studying the conceptualization processes around climate issues seems nowadays imperative. Concretely, focusing on the Climate Emergency issue, we intend to account for the metaphorical mappings that have given rise to a growing usage of this conceptualization of the environmental crisis in online media.

We argue that the relation between discourse and cognition can significantly contribute to the understanding of cognitive processes linked to sociocultural aspects, since a group's discourse is reflected in the individual's discourse – or vice versa (Van Dijk, 2008, among others). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), our individual value system is coherent with the metaphors diffused through the mass culture(s) and/or in the sociocultural contexts shared by historically situated subjects. Therefore, we defend the relationship between Cognitive Linguistics and the digital discourse on the climate crisis since the debates disseminated in mediatic discourses shape both the public's minds and discourse.

Some surveys registered an increase in public awareness about environmental issues, considering their relationship with quality of life and daily habits.¹ Thus, it is important to question to what extent digital discourse plays a significant role in this dynamic and how some cognitive processes contribute to the construction of social, political, and ideological values that shape public opinion and actions, eliciting change in the mindsets, and therefore necessarily unleash ideological confrontation.

In this context, figurative language, with special reference to metaphor, plays a crucial role in turning the concept more familiar, tangible, so that social actors would be able to relate it to their daily lives and develop tools that could allow them to perceive its nuances and consequences. So far, from the Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis approaches,

1. Areia et al. (2019); Schmidt and Delicado (2014); Schmidt et al. (2018).

some studies have pinpointed that WAR and RACE are the source domains of the metaphorical representations of the climate emergency frame.

However, it seems that this warfare perspective is slowly steering away to address the urgent need for developing more democratic and sustainable social-economic policies and habits. Thus we have collected a *corpus* of occurrences of Climate Emergency digital discourse on Instagram, with the purpose of uncovering the metaphoric meaning of the new conceptual framing hashtag *#uprootthesystem*, among young climate activists.

At last, we present some quantitative and qualitative results, considering the relevance of the dissemination of the expression “Climate Emergency” as a new metaphor-based expression, and center the debate on how the metaphorical hashtag *#uprootthesystem* may help to increase the debate about the global warming consequences worldwide, raising people’s consciousness on this issue, which has been strongly affecting the world as a whole.

THE MEDIA DISCOURSE ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

With the foundation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 as a worldwide organization responsible for publishing scientific reports on the planet’s climate situation, the debate about global warming and its impacts went beyond the scientific sphere, gaining a lot of space in the political agenda. Thus, the politicization of climate change has achieved greater notoriety in debates around sociopolitical issues, as well as its mitigation actions and impacts on economy and society in general.²

Mainly from the 1990s, many scholars have pointed out that the environmental issues have transcended the physical and the political sciences, getting more attention and relevance in human and linguistic sciences as well. Some works linking discourse and environmental issues have gained notoriety, although the issue still lacks more current research – as in social media, for instance. Authors like Halliday (1990 *apud* Locky; Matthiessen, 2022) have highlighted the challenge to discuss environmental aspects from the linguist point of view.³

2. For more on Environmental and Communication Sociology and the intersection with the climate crisis, see Schmidt, 1999.

3. Other relevant works on discourse and environment are: Fill, A.; Mühlhäusler, P. (2001) (Orgs.). *The ecolinguistics reader. Language, ecology and environment*. Continuum; Fill, A.; Penz, H.; Trampe, W. (2002) (Orgs.). *Colourful Green Ideas. Papers from the Conference ‘30 years of language and ecology’* (Graz, 2000) and the Symposium ‘Sprach und Ökologie’ (Passau, 2001). Peter Lang; Carvalho, A. (2002) *Climate in the news. The British press and the discursive construction of the greenhouse effect*. University of London; Ramos, R. (2009). *O discurso do ambiente na imprensa e na escola. Uma abordagem linguística*. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

More recently, Negrea-Busuioc (2017) and Boykoff (2011) have emphasized that climate change has not been just a problem of the natural sciences, whose solutions must come exclusively from the scientific community; its reach has also been extended to social, political and even individual spheres, affecting different interests according to the social actors involved in this problem.

Nowadays ‘climate change’ is no longer thought merely as an environmental and scientific issue. Rather the Kautskian ‘climate question’ is considered one that, more now than ever, permeates our individual, as well as shared, economic, political, social, and cultural lives. As the notion of climate change has increasingly dominated the contemporary science and policy landscapes, it has also more visibly inhabited public discourse, through news and entertainment media representations and popular culture (Boykoff, 2011, p. 1).

It is crucial to highlight the democratization of mass medias, offering platforms – such as social networks – as open channels of communication, so that internet users can voice their opinions, and therefore shape the public agenda. Hence, online mass media may serve as mediators in the process of communicating science and politics to ‘common citizens’, by promoting new debates and eliciting behavior change. In the case of the expression chosen for analysis in this paper, the hashtag *#uprootthesystem*, Boykoff argues (*op. cit.*, p. 2), that it is “vitaly important to examine the ways in which media representations and symbols are produced, interpreted and consumed, thus influencing a spectrum of possibilities for governance and decision making”. Nevertheless, although these new media resources are understood as “dynamic and contested spaces where various ‘actors’ battle to shape public understand and engagement” (Boykoff, *op. cit.*, p. 3), we must take into consideration that news dissemination does not necessary implies the growth of the public’s awareness and engagement; however, it may work as an effective strategy for achieving those, through critical inputs.⁴

Consequently, the mass medias have, on one hand, a great impact on the images’ framing of reality(ies) in a standardized and predictable way, whereas these impacts are limited regarding the interaction between the message conveyed and its recipients.⁵ In this sense, the framing

4. Boykoff (2008a) *apud* Boykoff (2011).

5. MacQuail (1994, p. 331) *apud* Scheufele (1999, p. 105).

process is defined and operationalized as the basis of social constructivism, and the mass media actively defines the constructed frames through which readers and spectators discuss and interpret public events. At the same time, the subjects' processing and interpretation of a determined issue are influenced by pre-existing schemas, structures and/or frames; therefore, the mediated discourse is part of the process through which subjects (re)build meanings, impacting and (re)defining political decision priorities regarding climate issues.

However, climate change metaphorical frameworks are not always beneficial for a better understanding of the matter, since they correspond to a worldview that tries to impose itself on divergent discourses. One of the problems focuses on paradoxes that certain metaphorical expressions can propagate when used as universal truths and absolute certainties, as the case of 'low carbon diet' and 'carbon sinner'⁶, which can lead to social apathy, discredit, or political paralysis. Nevertheless, metaphoric discourse can contribute to the popularization of discourses on climate change, thus influencing the way politicians talk about the theme, usually from an economic and political perspective.

The response of individuals to certain facts, news and social issues will necessarily result from the way they are presented and framed in media discourses. Nisbet (2009) states that the terminologies and the visual contexts adopted to describe a given problem will influence the different responses of the subjects, that is, studies from this perspective share the belief that new framings bridge broader sociocultural domains and everyday understanding of social interactions. Thus, when considering the framing process, we must consider both mediatic and individual frames and relate them consistently.⁷

As defended by Lakoff (2010), to some extent the cognitive frame has motivated changes in attitudes towards materiality, e.g., companies that have adopted sustainability campaigns (such as the production of electric cars, plastic packaging reduction, sustainable civil construction materials, sustainable engineering etc.) and food awareness (production and consumption of

6. Nerlich (2010) *apud*
Negrea-Busuioc (2017, p. 123).

7. Friedland and Zhong (1996) *apud*
Scheufele (1999, p. 13).

organic foods, less consumption of meat etc.). However, environmental sciences data are still not enough to motivate a significant change in the mentality of individuals. For this, it is necessary to reflect on the influence of discursive power to change conservative perspectives on climate issues. Although climate change issues have been studied from different perspectives, the discourses on Climate Emergency are lacking attention.

According to Boykoff (2011), there is still a lack of criticism of framing processes related to climate issues disseminated in the mass media. For the researcher, these framings remain outdated, while those focused on market policies – aimed merely at economic development to the detriment of human equity and historical reparation of colonization processes – dominate the media and political decision-making. However, it is noticeable that environmental activism and public awareness have grown on the last decade, mainly among the younger generations, e.g., green companies, sustainable economic models, NGOs; in addition, digital platforms' interaction and a more emphatic media coverage have made scientific information about the climate crisis more accessible, motivating changes in our daily habits (e.g., recycling, adopting a vegan diet, saving water and energy, reducing excessive consumption, increasing the use of fossil fuels free means of transport etc.) which may, in a long term, contribute to reduce pollution in big cities, for instance.

FRAMING THE EXPRESSION CLIMATE EMERGENCY

It is worth noting that the expression – and, as defended on this paper, the framing – *Climate Emergency* has been used by environmental activists since the beginning of the 21st century. One of its first records come from the city of Darebin, Melbourne, Australia, following a petition entitled Declaration of Climate Emergency, in 2016. Then, this declaration was also made by the cities of Hoboken, New Jersey, and Berkeley, California. The expression was later adopted by the United Kingdom's Green Party, being the first official European declaration, in 2018, and in Scotland, in 2019. Thereafter, the UK parliament declared a state of Climate Emergency for all its countries.

These actions motivated the emergence and subsequent legitimation of the expression *Climate Emergency*, being adopted by global figures, such as the Pope Francis. Recognized and disseminated in the scientific community (Ripple et al., 2020), it gained global notoriety from 2019 onwards, configuring itself in a frame argumentatively constructed in the public space and recurrently assumed by several public figures of environmental activism, political parties, environmental organizations, NGOs, students etc.

According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary (2021), until 2018 the noun ‘emergency’ was commonly associated with the modifiers ‘hospital’, ‘health’ and ‘family’. However, from 2019 on, the modifier ‘climate’ surpassed all other types, becoming the most used expression, with a margin of difference three times greater than ‘health’, the second in the ranking.

The Oxford Word of the Year 2019 is *climate emergency*. *Climate emergency* is defined as ‘a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.’ This year, heightened public awareness of climate science and the myriad implications for communities around the world has generated enormous discussion of what the UN Secretary-General has called ‘the defining issue of our time’. ... Our research reveals a demonstrable escalation in the language people are using to articulate information and ideas concerning the climate. This is most clearly encapsulated by the rise of *climate emergency* in 2019 (Oxford Languages Dictionary, 2019).

In accordance with Boykoff (2011, p. 5), the framing processes are “inherent to cognition, and effectively contextualize as well as ‘fix’ interpretive categories in order to help explain and describe the complex environmental processes of climate change”. The author also defends that frames should not be limited to those already known as important currently and legitimized by the public in general; nonetheless, we must also consider alternative frames to elicit new political debates, due to the fact that depending on how we frame a determined problem, theme, concept etc., it could work as a way of marginalizing or validating discourses, if the audiences do not take them critically.⁸

8. Castree (2004); Forsyth (2003)
apud Boykoff, (2011, p. 3-4).

In the contemporary Linguistics studies, one of the areas that corroborate the understanding of the processes of metaphorical representation of reality is Frame Semantics. Kövecses (2006, p. 64), following Fillmore (1977), defines frame as “a structured mental representation of a conceptual category” being, therefore, understood as the shared mental representation of cultural patterns.

[w]hen something is continually represented in the same way so that it becomes the established way of thinking about something, it creates a frame, a noun; a socially shared perspective on something... “Framing” means drawing an attention to, or raising awareness of, selective aspects of a particular entity or situation thereby introducing some form of cognitive bias. ... Over the time the action of framing produces a result, a frame. i.e. a noun (also known as a schema) that is a perspective that arises when things are constantly described in the same way (Charteris-Black, 2019, p. 16-17).

In this perspective, the frame consists of a system of concepts, whose understanding depends on the entire structure in which it is inserted; when a given conceptual structure emerges in a contextualized communicative scenario, representations are activated from our previous experiences, contributing to the cognitive process of interpreting, and understanding situations, concepts, scripts, events etc. From the perspective of Frame Semantics, our cultural and experiential realities shape socio-cognitive frames, which will define our perception of a given scene, situation etc., that is, of what we understand as ‘reality’: ‘true’, ‘false’, ‘good’, ‘bad’, in short, our system values and ‘truths’, as well as our performance in the world.

For our cognitive experience to take place across cognitive domains, we need to make categorizations based on prototypes; in other words, our cognitive domains result from mental/conceptual mappings, from projections and analogies. Van Dijk (2010) relates to these theories through the concept of ‘mental models’, which postulates that the non-visible part of the discourse is configured in the form of a huge knowledge-based network of concepts and propositions. Thus, a frame is understood from the lexicon and the relationships of words in context, that is, from the lexical units (LUs). Fillmore’s (1977) argumentation invokes situations in which the speaker introduces new lexical material to a given interaction scene.

Moreover, according to Fillmore and Baker (2009), the subjective acquisition of frames permeates, in addition to sociocultural experiences, physical and visual characteristics of human relationships, such as bodily experiences, stages of the life cycle, our relationship with nature, biological and emotional needs. Subjects, as members of dialogically organized linguistic communities, consciously or unconsciously respond to the symbolic realities they experience, conveyed by symbols, behaviors, cultural values, political and ideological stances etc., developing and sharing their systematic knowledge about their concrete, however subjective, reality(ies).

Hence, it must be highlighted that frames, prototypes and mental models will determine our cognitive domains that shape people's thoughts and actions. As postulated by Lakoff (2010), when we hear a word or a LU we activate their respective frames; in the case of communicating complex facts or truths, the person who communicates them must choose the words very carefully, in order to activate the desired frames for each communication event.

One of the major results in the cognitive and brain sciences is that we think in terms of typically unconscious structures called 'frames' (sometimes 'schemas'). Frames include semantic roles, relations between roles, and relations to other frames... All thinking and talking involves 'framing.' And since frames come in systems, a single word typically activates not only its defining frame, but also much of the system its defining frame is in. (Lakoff, 2010, p. 71-72)

In this perspective, Lakoff (1987) defined as Idealized Cognitive Model the assumption that we cannot understand the frame as a reliable representation of reality, but rather as an idealized version of it, resulting from the categorization process. This process takes place from other structural cognitive elements, such as propositions, metaphors, metonymies, symbols and image schemas. According to Kövecses (2006), it is precisely the frame that allows us to perceive intercultural variation, since members of different cultures interpret reality differently.

The frame has been studied under two distinct, although related, conceptions. The first one, defended by Fillmore (1977, 1985), from a microscopic point of view, refers to specific situations or events. This concept emerged as a counterpoint to the structuralist approach, which

described lexical domains following patterns of relationships between words, using purely the internal structure of the language. Nevertheless, Frame Semantics and Fillmore's Semantics of Comprehension approach seeks to describe lexical relationships in terms of conceptual systems underlying language, recognizing that linguistic categories – words, expressions, grammatical and syntactic structures – presuppose a structured understanding of institutions, cultures, beliefs, shared experiences, and patterns of thinking and behavior. Through this perspective, lexical items are perceived as a way of discriminating, situating, classifying and/or naming functions or conceptual structures.

Still based on Fillmore's perspective (1977), when a linguist explores the limits of a given word or LU, what is intended is that we make judgments not necessarily from our own understanding, since it is based on our own prototypical representation. The author, on the other hand, suggests that the subject makes judgments in terms of his or her desire to expand a certain frame, that is, to extend a frame hitherto associated with a certain scene or a familiar situation to a new situation, of which he or she still does not have a well-defined idea, or for which there is still no socially agreed frame:

[the informant] is being asked to decide whether he is willing to create a new frame for the new scene using a given word from a different frame; or he is being asked whether he has already confronted this problem and made a decision. This research is particularly tricky, since the linguist may be confronting the informant with a situation that is not personally meaningful for him, with a situation that is, which does not call on the informant's actual communicating, expressive, or classifying needs (Fillmore, 1977, p. 69)

Here we pursue a macroscopic view of the frame concept, as defended by Scheufele (1999), Nisbet (2009) and Lakoff (2021). The authors highlight that metaphorical thinking, through discursive realizations, drives new forms of action; therefore, the expression – and new frame – *Climate Emergency* intends to urgently bring to light climate change mitigation actions by policy makers. In the words of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 236), “[p]olitical and economic ideologies are framed in metaphorical terms. Like all other metaphors, political and economic

metaphors can hide aspects of reality but, in the area of politics and economics, metaphors matter more, because they constrain our lives.”

Lakoff (2010) also argues that media discourses and/or opinion makers in general should reconstruct or create new frames that address the issue of global warming in a more accessible way; in order for the crisis to be understood, subjects need the right conceptual structures in their brain circuits, since a large part of the population does not have a repertoire of frames that allows them to understand the climate emergency in depth or, as the author says, “the real crisis”.

Some suggested strategies for restructuring frames related to the climate crisis could be the choice of words and slogans; talk about values, not just facts and figures; use simple language; use emoticons as resources. Nisbet (2009) points out that the meaning of a given frame is instantly translated from devices such as catchphrases, metaphors, sound bites, graphics, as well as allusions to history, culture or literature, e.g., the expression ‘green jobs.’

According to Charteris-Black (2019), frames are often made up of metaphors that narrate allegories or scenarios, and this happens fundamentally in political discourse. Since Climate Emergency and political intervention are intimately related, the role of metaphor in frame building must certainly be taken into account.

From a macroscopic perspective, it is claimed that the associations between words and meanings made by the speakers are more related to individual stories and repertoires than to the structure of the language itself. Thus, semantic analysis from this perspective should not be dissociated from socio-anthropological, personal, subjective, idiosyncratic, and cultural experiences of the individuals, i.e., from the socio-ideological mental models that shape their minds and actions.

METAPHOR AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: SOME BASIC REMARKS

Before the 1970s, metaphor was studied in Philosophy and Rhetoric as a stylistic resource; however, with the publication of the well-known work *Metaphors we live by* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the study of metaphor gained prominence in linguistic studies and human cognition. The authors, placing metaphor as a central element in everyday communication processes, empirically showed that our cognitive system is predominantly metaphorical and that our way of thinking, understanding, and acting in the world is set by metaphorical structures.

Sardinha (2007, p. 60-61), recognizing that there are differences in methodological terms of the study of metaphor, traditional view, conceptual metaphor, systematic metaphor and grammatical metaphor, summarizes its main aspects, namely: ‘The metaphor is a language-in-use phenomenon’; ‘The metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon’; ‘Conceptual, systematic and grammatical metaphors are usual resources for language users’; ‘The metaphor is an important phenomenon to understand the human being’.

Hence, the aforementioned authors reinforce the experientialist character of metaphor, foregrounding it as a figure of thought, that is, a tool for conceptualizing the world. Regarding the conceptual metaphor, we can affirm that they convey shared meanings among several languages and cultures. For example, conceptual metaphors such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS A PLAY or AFFECTION IS WARMTH, due to their universal character, unconsciously integrate the conceptual system of innumerable cultures.

According to Charteris-Black (2014), conceptual metaphors are useful for identifying discursive characteristics of metaphors, as well as ideological and axiological aspects underlying their uses. These metaphors should be identified when there is evidence of systematic use of the same source domain in a given discourse – which can be defined in terms of genre or individual style. The study of the meaning intended by the target domain in the observed contexts

can reveal, for example, positive or negative representations of a certain event, fact, reality, social issue etc.:

... well known world leaders publicly address the issue of the changing climate from a domestic (the immediate effects on the lives of their fellow countrymen) and a global perspective, respectively (the impact on the entire planet), and frequently use metaphors to describe the utmost gravity of the problem and the actions necessary to combat this threat. (Negrea-Busuioc, 2017, p. 119)

With this in mind, the critical metaphor analysis perspective is focused on discursive systems, for example, how issues, actors and social groups are discussed in political discourses. However, to classify and interpret metaphors, it is necessary to examine them from the point of view of individual discourses (local systems), as well as observe them in general linguistic corpora (global systems). Global systems are important as they can provide evidence of typical/ordinary uses of a given metaphor, while local systems can reveal rhetorical and persuasive features of a particular discourse (Charteris-Black, 2014).

Considering the theoretical-methodological approach of this research, some authors have argued that political discourse on climate change frequently map WAR and RACE in the source domain onto climate change in the target domain as ‘a war to be fought against’. Concretely, Negrea-Busuioc (2017) pinpointed that “fighting climate change is war” and “fighting climate change is a race” were the two prominent conceptual metaphors in the Climate Emergency speech of the ex-US president Barack Obama.

In the WAR scenario, it is inferred that climate change is the enemy that must be fought. Oreskes (2011 *apud* Negrea-Busuioc, 2017) argues that the WAR metaphor is widely recognized as one of the most persuasive in the framing process of climate change, as it signals the public’s familiarity with military conflict and their understanding of the implications and efforts both to plan and to execute military campaigns.

As for the RACE metaphor, it is perceived as complementary to the frame of WAR, both based on the idea of combat, confrontation, and competition. However, the RACE frame suggests a more positive understanding of this problem, as it focuses on the urgency of actions and confidence in the results. Furthermore, metaphors linked to ‘sport’ can also be associated with situations where victory and winners are determined, resulting in awards and public recognition (Cudd, 2007 *apud* Negrea-Busuioc, 2017).⁹

According to Charteris-Black (2014), metaphors generally arise from the tension between the intended meaning of a word and/or expression in a specific discursive context and the literal, linguistic meaning that this same word and/or expression conveys. The critical linguist is concerned with finding evidence about intentions and purposes from a *corpus*, through associations of a word/expression that allow making inferences about the speaker’s intentions.

Based on this presupposition, we noticed empirically and critically on online social networks and NGOs websites that, beyond the most common associations of the climate crisis to the source domains WAR and RACE, other frames and metaphors have gained space, making ground for other forms of representations. These new framings and metaphorical representations have encouraged more engagement from stakeholders in general, common citizens and political powers, aiming at more humanitarian goals, for instance, the urgent need for developing more democratic and sustainable social-economic policies and habits, historical reparation for colonized and exploited countries, reducing famine, poverty, discrimination, specially racial discrimination, class inequality, rethinking and repairing climate injustice, among others. Due to the huge amount of data on social networks, we chose two remarkable Instagram pages, considered one of the most influential social networks nowadays.

9. Negrea-Busuioc (2017, p. 122) refers to different authors that have addressed this idea, namely Nerlich, (2012, 2014); Hellsten (2014); Jaspal (2014). Some metaphorical expressions highlighted in English speaking countries are *carbon footprint*, *low carbon diet*, *carbon finance*, *carbon sinner*, *(low) carbon economy*, *carbon market*, *low carbon future*, *greenhouse gas*, *greenhouse emissions*, *notorious greenhouse effect*.

METHODOLOGY

The adopted methodology was guided by these main objectives: to present a small clipping of multimodal data on Climate Emergency, namely, posts taken from the Instagram pages of two renowned environmental activist entities, the NGO *Fridays for Future* and from the recognized activist Greta Thunberg; and to identify new framings in the rhetoric of climate activism, with special reference to the hashtag *#uprootthesystem*. We also argue that new conceptual metaphors might be identified, considering the conceptual intersection involving the climate crisis and Climate Emergency framing. Moreover, as a directive speech act it instigates people to pursue concrete actions against the global warming. The corpus of *#uprootthesystem* was collected from July/2021 to July/2022, the period during which this hashtag has triggered intensive public online participation.

Although we had a quantitative approach in mind, we have also qualitatively analyzed a reduced number of posts due for uncovering metaphor rhetoric. In fact, we have pursued the methodology advocated by Charteris-Black (2014). He claims that the researcher should start with contextual analysis and selection of discourses, formulating questions that raise awareness to the issue under study, and then reflect on the impact of rhetorical strategies involving topics of social relevance. Some motivation questions that helped us to start our research were: when and where are such speeches conveyed? Which genres are chosen and why? Who are the subjects/actors involved in the process of construction and reception of these discourses? Are they speeches of individuals, of groups or general samples of linguistic occurrences?

In this perspective, the explanation of metaphors is suggested from the context, the enunciator's intentions and purposes in sociopolitical contexts. This phase involves judging, for example, how a given metaphor can influence the audience/reader and how it interacts with other enunciative aspects, i.e., its rhetorical power; and, consequently, how it can change opinions, values, beliefs, and worldviews. Another aspect to consider is that since metaphors usually

occur in sentences and/or expressions, it is recommended that the search is done through collocations and/or expressions rather than isolated lexical units (LUs). The most ideologically interesting metaphors are those that have become usual collocations through recurrent use (Charteris-Black, 2014).

Since a conceptual metaphor arises from the mapping between two different cognitive domains, it will become apparent when the word or expression is used in a new context, different from its usual or literal context. At this point, the methodology presented by Charteris-Black (2014) converges with the Pragglejaz Group (2007) when it proposes the following procedures: (i) read the complete text/discourse, aiming at its general understanding; (ii) determine the LUs to be analyzed; (iii) compare/contrast the contextual meaning, considering what comes before and after the LUs, with its basic, more concrete and literal meaning (in this case, we can resort to dictionaries); (iv) finally decide whether the contextual meaning is in contrast to the basic meaning, but can only be understood from the comparison with the latter.

In short, based on the methodological assumptions described, we reiterate our research path: to identify the growing usage of the hashtag *#uprootthesystem* on social networks by young environmental activists on 02 Instagram pages. First, we collected quantitatively and qualitatively some occurrences of posts which relate the narrative of confronting the climate crisis with other sociopolitical aspects. Then, by integrating the two methodologies forementioned, we identified some conceptual metaphors linked to the expression *uproot the system* and how the mappings have been designed.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The first appearances of the hashtag *#uprootthesystem* on Instagram are traced back to July/2021. The hashtag, as a rhetoric online discourse strategy among young activists, nowadays has its own Instagram page, counting with more than 23.100 occurrences, until July/2022¹⁰. However,

10. Available on: <https://instagram.com/explore/tags/uprootthesystem/>.

the discursive analysis in the present paper only contemplates two following pages of renowned protagonists in the climate issue domain, as mentioned above.

Considering our first objective, a quantitative analysis emerging from the clipping of posts containing the hashtag *#uprootthesystem* on the Instagram pages of the NGO *Fridays for Future* and the environmental activist Greta Thunberg revealed that this framing was mostly disseminated from July/21 to January/22, contextualized with multimodal texts and critical comments regarding the climate crisis. This was certainly motivated by the COP26, which happened on November 5th in Glasgow, Scotland.¹¹ The choosing of this specific period to highlight the climate emergency indicates that this type of activism has grown as a rhetorical resource for questioning numerous issues linked to the climate crisis, inciting the youth to confront political and economic powers, and stimulating more activists to join this cause worldwide. From February/2022 on, we could see a strong decline of the expression on the two pages, giving more visibility to other hashtags such as *#peoplenotprofit* and *#standwithukraine*.¹²

11. Available on: <https://ukcop26.org>.

12. Although there was a noticeable number of these hashtags, also related to the climate crisis, they are not the focus of this paper. They were chosen just to exemplify other online movements that were starting to gain notoriety.

Table 1 - Occurrences of the expression *#uprootthesystem* on the Instagram pages *Fridays for Future* and Greta Thunberg's from July/2021 until July/2022.

<i>Months x Instagram Pages</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>
	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Fridays for Future</i>	6	10	29	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Greta Thunberg</i>	1	1	6	9	6	6	4	0	0	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	7	11	35	16	6	7	4	1	0	0	1	0	0

Source - The author.

Among some of the chosen posts for analysis, the following examples demonstrate a critical narrative, from which young people demand public policies for repairing social injustices that have been growing due to the climate crisis. The first one, taken from a movement that happened in Brazil, accuses the federal administration of neglecting the relation between public policies and environmental degradation. They claim to the policy makers to “save their future”, by recognizing that the climate crisis makes social inequality even more evident.

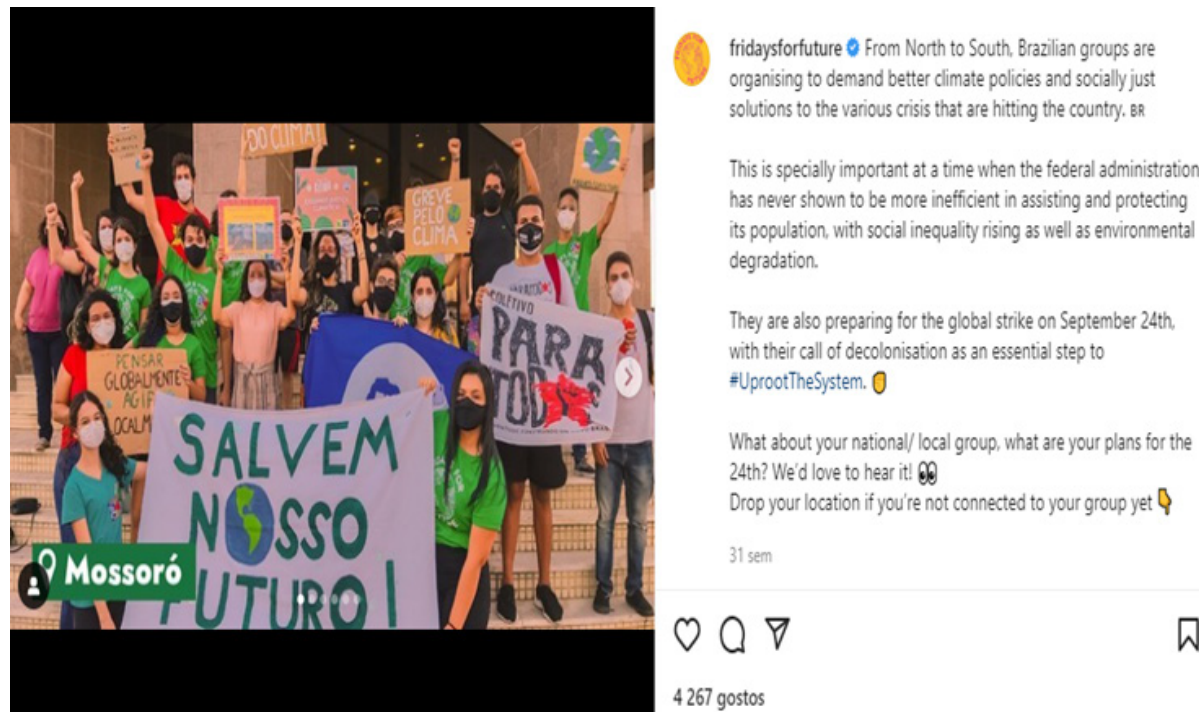


Figure 1 - Climate Strike – Mossoró/
Rio Grande do Norte/Brazil

Source - Instagram / NGO Fridays
for Future /Sept. 21st, 2021.

13. *Activist Speeches*, Fridays for Future, 2022. Available on: <https://fridaysforfuture.org/what-we-do/activist-speeches/>.

The next post by Greta Thunberg emphatically narrates on the number of participants in the climate march, which took place during COP26 in Glasgow, UK. Thunberg reiterates her speeches popularly known for their irony and defiance to political powers – such as the quotation marks in “leaders”; the adjective “so-called” referring to political leaders who should act more assertively, aiming seriously at solving the climate crisis – and not only delivering empty speeches, whose focus rely on economic power decisions, not on climate justice;¹³ and the demonstrative pronoun in capital letters “THIS”, when referring to the image, highlighting the leadership power of the activist in mobilizing thousands of people on the streets for a cause.

Figure 2 - Climate March – Glasgow/UK

Source - Instagram / Greta Thunberg /Nov. 6th, 2021



The multimodal context of this post builds on the conceptual metaphor CLIMATE MARCH IS PLANET PROTECTION. So, the conceptual mapping advocates that taking to action by marching against the COP26 metaphorically represents a protection against the environment. The linguistic argument is reinforced by the image of thousands of young protesters, which consists of a multimodal rhetorical strategy conceived to strengthen the power of youth militancy, criticizing capitalist model of consumption and management of non-renewable energies. Moreover, it denounces the negligence of political leaders, which have led the planet to an unsustainable climate crisis by paying little attention to the consequences of industrial production and consumption models.

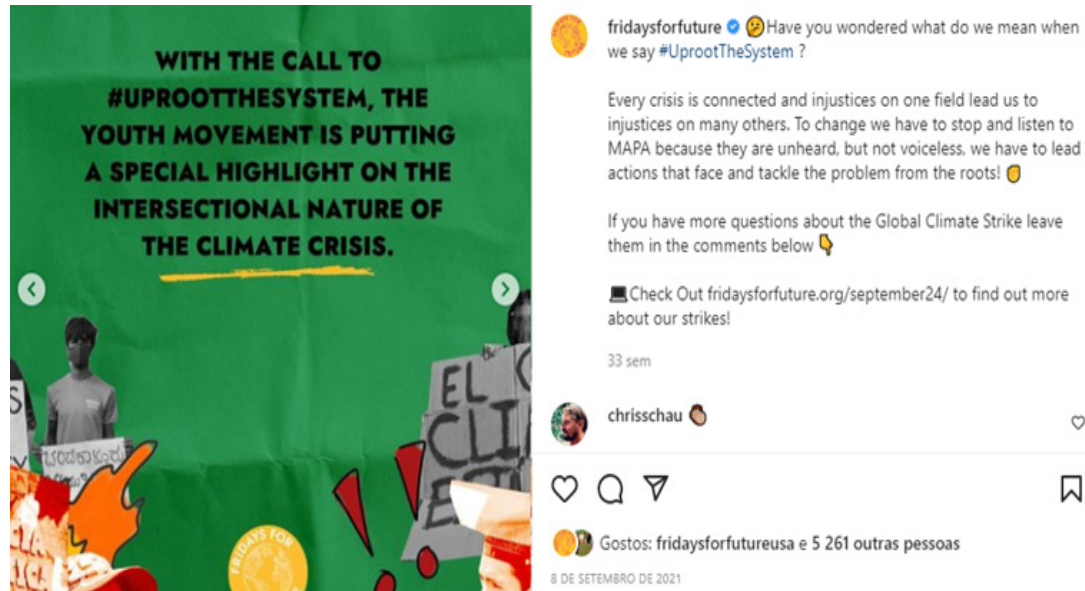
The next publication selected for discussion consists of a series of posts by the NGO Fridays for Future, where they intend to explain what the expression ‘uproot the system’ means and what they plan to achieve through this metaphor. The following post builds on the expression *the intersectional nature of the climate crisis*, which is crucial for understanding how the metaphor *uproot the system* is related to many social issues, such as racism, ableism, sexism, class inequality, and mainly the historical colonization of the MAPA countries:

MAPA (Most Affected Peoples and Areas) are experiencing the worst impacts of the climate crisis and are unable to adapt to it. ... the elite of the Global North ... have caused the destruction of the lands of MAPA through colonialism, imperialism, systemic injustices, and their wanton greed which ultimately caused the warming of the planet. With both the COVID, climate, and every crisis in history, overexploited countries and marginalized sectors of society are systematically left behind to fend for themselves (NGO Fridays for Future, 2022).

Figure 3 - What does 'uproot the system' mean?

Source - Instagram / Fridays for Future / Sep. 8th, 2021.¹⁴

14. The full publication consists of a series of 06 posts, available on: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CTkpLnUvWgV/>. The NGO also makes a series of similar publications on their website, eliciting a discussion about diverse intersectional social issues: <https://fridaysforfuture.org/september24/>. The full document can be accessed on: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1b25qhqIf0E-4h6NQ-DzLX40YifD6khpgee3Vl6g7nNSE/edit>.



Our following post was chosen as a clear example of the postulate by Nisbet (2009), Scheufele (1999) and Lakoff (2010), when they defend how the issue should be addressed by the mass media. The caption emphasizes exactly the importance of the media connecting the innumerable natural disasters to the climate crisis, through accessible and clear information, so that the population in general could be aware that the 'natural' catastrophes they have been facing more and more frequently are related to the climate emergency and its sociopolitical consequences.

RIBEIRO, CAMILA BELIZARIO; *A emergência climática é uma guerra ou estamos descolonizando o sistema? O enquadramento de metáforas conceituais no discurso da emergência climática / Is climate emergency a war or are we uprooting the system? Framing conceptual metaphors in the climate emergency discourse*
REDIS: REVISTA DE ESTUDOS DO DISCURSO, Nº 11 ANO 2022, PP. 217-245

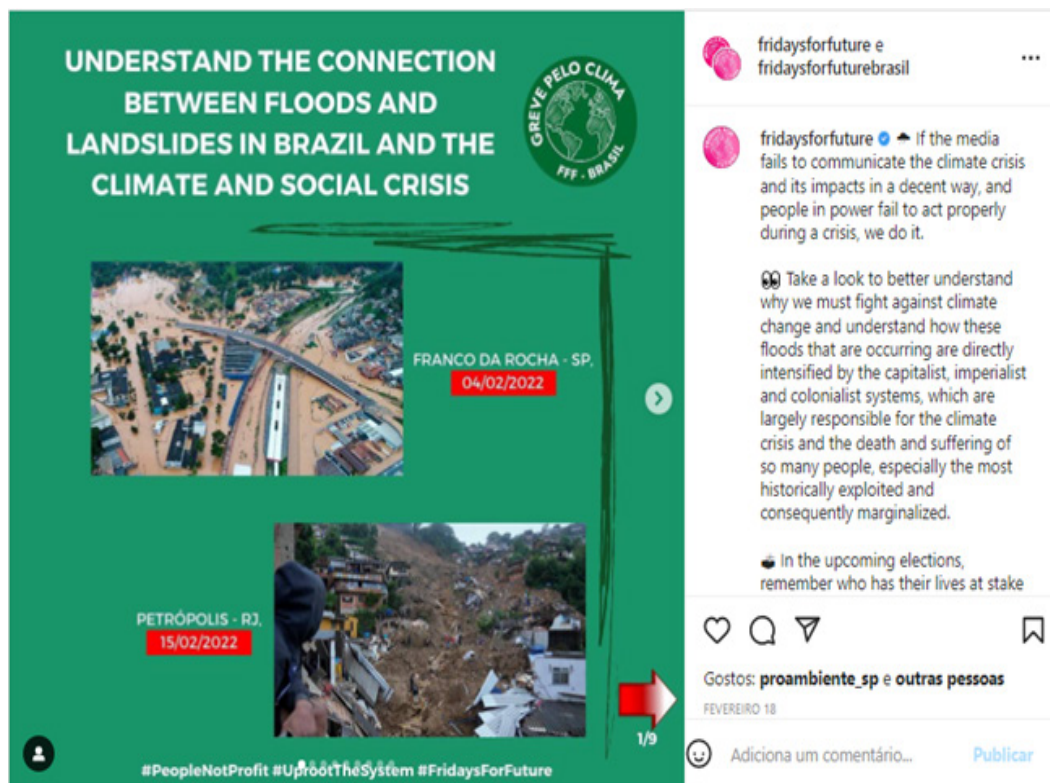


Figure 4 - Understand the connection between floods and landslides in Brazil and the climate and social crisis

Source - Instagram / Fridays for Future /Feb.18th, 2022.

In sum, the examples above consist of a brief demonstration of the type of posts disseminated on the Instagram by young people, usually followed by the hashtag *#uprootthesystem*, which demonstrates the rhetorical strategy of multimodality, followed by discourses questioning the capitalist order and its consumption patterns, as well as the appeal to world leaders to reduce the use of fossil fuels, which, among other factors, have generated a rapid increase in the planet's temperature and the consequent state of climate emergency. Through the bias of Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, the discussion elicited by the posts

brings a new perspective on this issue voiced by young people by redressing the way they think about the climate crisis.

Thereafter, we carried on the second objective of this paper, which consisted of mapping cognitively how the expression *uproot the system* could be conveyed as a new metaphorical expression. Our first step was researching some reputed dictionaries about the literal meaning of the verb “uproot”:

Table 2 - Literal meanings of the verb uproot

Source - The author (adapted from the quoted dictionaries).

Dictionary	‘Uproot’ Meaning
Cambridge	to pull a plant including its roots out of the ground; to remove a person from their home or usual environment.
Oxford	to pull a tree, plant, etc. out of the ground; to leave a place where you have lived for a long time; to make somebody do this; uproot yourself/somebody.
Merriam-webster	to remove as if by pulling up; to pull up by the roots; to displace from a country or traditional habitat
Macmillan	to leave the place where you live and go to live somewhere else, especially when you do not want to leave, or to make someone do this; to pull a whole tree or plant from the ground, including all the roots that grow in the soil
Collins	if you uproot yourself or if you are uprooted, you leave, or are made to leave, a place where you have lived for a long time; if someone uproots a tree or plant, or if the wind uproots it, it is pulled out of the ground.

After contrasting the literal meanings (more concrete) with the contextual meanings (more abstract), we indicate some possible examples of lexical units that support new metaphorical significations for the expression in the context of climate activism.

<p>Source domain SYSTEM</p>	<p>capitalism, money, power relations, selling, buying, renting, monopoly, economic control, dependance, consumption, greed, work, profit, means of productions, accumulation, private property, competition, market, social organization, inequality, politics, wealth, poverty, patrimony, class privilege, exploitation, survival, technology, material goods, capital, gain, loss, expense, revenue, benefit, harm, inhumanity, etc.</p>
<p>Target domain UPROOT</p>	<p>pull from its roots, replant, take from a place to another, destroy, leave, abandon, change, move, remove, etc.</p>

Table 3. Lexical units mapping of the source and target domains *system* and *uproot*

Source - The author.

When mapping the source and the target domains in the expression *Uproot the System*, considering the basic formula SOURCE DOMAIN is TARGET DOMAIN, or vice versa, we came up with some proposals of new conceptual metaphors: THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS A TREE/PLANT THAT NEEDS TO BE UPROOTED; THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS A TREE/PLANT THAT NEEDS TO BE UPROOTED AND REPLANTED; THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS A PLACE THAT NEEDS TO BE LEFT/ABANDONED; THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS OUR USUAL ENVIRONMENT/HABITAT/HOME THAT NEEDS TO BE ABANDONED; THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS AN ECONOMICAL MODEL THAT NEEDS TO BE RE-THOUGHT/REFORMULATED, etc.

It is also noticeable, through the examples given, the highlighted aspects of this paper, such as the intersectional nature of the crisis and the metaphorical nature of the hashtag chosen for analysis. In addition, the rhetoric strategies of *Climate Emergency* as a new frame and a new target domain make room for other new conceptual metaphors, for instance: CLIMATE EMERGENCY IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PLANET; CRIMATE EMERGENCY IS DENYING A FUTURE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE; CLIMATE EMERGENCY IS A POLITICAL CRISIS; CLIMATE EMERGENCY IS HARMING THE POOREST COUNTRIES;

CLIMATE EMERGENCY IS DEATH; CLIMATE EMERGENCY IS ENHANCING SOCIAL INEQUALITY; among others.

So, based on the bibliography presented, the forementioned analysis and the mental mapping, it has been demonstrated that there has been a transition between the basic or literal meaning of the verb *uproot* found in some dictionaries to a metaphorical, more wide and subjective sense. The verb, when conveyed within the expression *UPROOT THE SYSTEM* as a rhetoric strategy in the context of Instagram climate crisis activism can be classified as a new metaphorical expression, acquiring a new metaphorical sense through eliciting new concepts, truths and ideologies around the given social issue, instigating subjects to take action towards the environment, being characterized as a directive speech act.

FINAL REMARKS

The debate about framing processes and rhetorical resources as manipulation strategies in political polarization discourses are topics that deserve attention, as they involve ideological aspects that end up influencing public opinions and political decision concerning social issues. The (re)formulation of frames that favor the communication of scientific facts, making them tangible to the general public and to the mass media, contributes for the modification of the individuals' cognitive system, helping to corroborate the need for urgent actions in favor of public policies to mitigate the damage caused by global warming.

For that matter, as a theoretical-methodological approach, considering the non-neutrality of the researcher in Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 1997) and Critical Metaphor Studies (Charteris-Black, 2014), this paper aimed at analyzing some examples of Instagram posts on the Climate Emergency issue, as a worldwide concern. The two Instagram pages selected, the NGO Fridays for Future and Greta Thunberg's, were chosen due to their critical content and their impact on young people in several countries, which reflect the growing political power of climate engagement discourse. It was evident that the source domains of WAR and RACE

seem to give way to more hopeful and humanitarian discourses – such as historical reparation of social injustices and urgency of actions to mitigate climate change, based on the claim for a more egalitarian, democratic, and sustainable society.

These considerations corroborate the postulate already advocated by Lakoff (2010) that new frames need to be established, in order to broaden the public debate on issues of social relevance. The environmental problems that are worsening nowadays are rooted in economic factors; therefore, directly triggered by exacerbated consumption and thus reflecting human negligence regarding the exploitation of natural resources. Thus, the recognition of the Climate Emergency frame and its social implications, new rhetorical strategies (in this case, the dissemination of a new metaphor that can draw the attention of more individuals to the debate of a global issue) and media resources such as wide-ranging social networks have significantly contributed to the awareness of new generations to sociopolitical aspects that directly and indirectly affect our reality as subjects in a globalized world.

We understand that the interface between the topics discussed in this work can contribute to studies on the various biases through which climate change is communicated and perceived, currently envisaged by the frame of urgent action to mitigate the factors that degrade the environment. Framing processes and metaphorical constructions linked to climate emergency discourses reveal ideologies, political positions and different ways of understanding and dealing with the issue, which is already widely discussed both in the scientific and social spheres. Therefore, in the case of research on languages and discourses, we defend the researcher's critical position, based on the assumption that all discourse consists of a social practice, through which power relations and processes of social transformation are intimately linked.

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