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Helming Malaysia: Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills

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Abstract

This paper discusses the vocational roles constructed by Najib Razak, the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia for himself, his government, and relational identities for the Malaysian people and others, through Supply Bills. I model the study on Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis and Sack's Membership Categorisation Analysis, as frameworks. The findings indicate that Najib Razak and his government enacted a role as a ship captain, where the Malaysian people were positioned as passengers, sailing in a sea of world economy, and heading towards a status as a high-income developed nation. Through these metaphors, the people were reminded that without the government as helm of the ship, it is to reach the intended destination. Therefore, the use of metaphors in the Supply Bills serve predicative, empathetic, ideological, and mythical purposes, to legitimize both the government and its purposes as agents of governmentality. © 2023, Global Council on Anthropological Linguistics. All rights reserved.

Author keywords

Ideology; linguistic anthropology; Metaphor; political identity; prime minister

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