## A COGNITIVE AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO METAPHOR IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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**Abstract:** Metaphor is a powerful linguistic and cognitive tool frequently employed in political discourse to influence public perception and construct ideological narratives. This article examines the use of metaphor in English and Uzbek political speeches from both cognitive and pragmatic perspectives. It explores how metaphors conceptualize political realities and how they are pragmatically used to persuade, legitimize authority, and frame complex social issues. Through comparative analysis, the study reveals cultural, contextual, and functional similarities and differences in metaphor usage across both languages.

**Keywords:** metaphor, political discourse, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, English, Uzbek

### Introduction

Political language is more than mere communication—it is a strategic act aimed at persuasion, mobilization, and control. One of the most influential devices in this domain is metaphor. According to **Cognitive Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)**, metaphors are not only rhetorical figures but conceptual tools that shape our understanding of the world.

In political discourse, metaphors serve cognitive and pragmatic purposes: they help simplify abstract political concepts, shape ideological frames, and emotionally engage the audience. For example, framing a country as a "family" or political competition as a "battle" are common metaphorical strategies that implicitly structure political thinking.

This article investigates the metaphoric structures found in English and Uzbek political speeches and identifies how these metaphors function cognitively (as conceptual frameworks) and pragmatically (as tools of influence and meaning negotiation).

### Methodology

The research follows a **comparative qualitative approach**. The corpus consists of selected political speeches in English (e.g., speeches by Barack Obama, Rishi Sunak) and Uzbek (e.g., addresses by Shavkat Mirziyoyev and other state officials).

The analysis includes:
- **Identification and classification** of metaphors;
- **Mapping metaphors** to conceptual domains (e.g., WAR, JOURNEY, FAMILY);

• **Contextual analysis** from a **pragmatic perspective** (i.e., speaker intent, audience reaction, political function);

• Comparison of **cultural metaphorical patterns** in each language.

**Results**

**Cognitive Perspective:**

Both English and Uzbek political discourses rely heavily on conceptual metaphors such as:

• **POLITICS IS WAR** (e.g., "We must fight corruption" / "Biz korrupsiyaga qarshi kurashamiz")

• **NATION AS FAMILY** (e.g., "Our children's future" / "Yurt farzandlarining ertangi kuni")

• **POLITICAL JOURNEY** (e.g., "A path to prosperity" / "Yangi taraqqiyot yo'li")

These metaphors reflect universal cognitive patterns, yet their instantiations vary due to cultural context. For instance, Uzbek speeches often include metaphors rooted in **collectivism and national unity**, while English discourse emphasizes **individual leadership and democratic struggle**.

**Pragmatic Perspective:**

Metaphors pragmatically function to:

• Legitimize authority (e.g., presenting the leader as a "captain" or "father")

• Inspire hope or fear (e.g., "dark times" vs. "bright future")

• Unite or divide (e.g., "We stand together" vs. "They are the enemy")

Uzbek discourse tends to use metaphors that **reinforce national pride**, social harmony, and respect for tradition. English political rhetoric more frequently employs **adversarial metaphors** and focuses on **polarization** for mobilization.

**Discussion**

The study confirms that metaphor is not merely decorative but a strategic cognitive and pragmatic instrument in political speech. Politicians utilize metaphor to:

• **Frame political ideologies**;

• **Control narrative interpretation**;

• **Invoke emotional resonance** with audiences.

Cross-linguistically, while core metaphorical structures are shared, cultural values influence how these metaphors are actualized. Uzbek political metaphor tends toward **unity, moral authority**, and **developmental path metaphors**, reflecting nationalistic and state-building ideologies. In contrast, English political metaphor emphasizes **debate, competition**, and **individual agency**, reflecting pluralistic democratic traditions.

Such findings underscore the **interplay between language, culture, and power** in political communication.

**Conclusion**

Metaphors in political discourse function on both **cognitive** and **pragmatic** levels, shaping how political realities are understood and how political messages are received. In comparing English and Uzbek political speech, we observe both shared metaphorical frameworks and culturally distinct rhetorical strategies.

Understanding metaphor in this dual framework enhances not only linguistic awareness but also critical thinking regarding political influence and media literacy. For students, linguists, and political analysts, recognizing the metaphorical nature of political language is key to decoding ideological messages in cross-cultural contexts.

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