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Metaphorical Expressions in English and Uzbek Political Discourse: A Linguoculturological Analysis

Ruziyeva Nafisa Zarifovna¹, Boltayeva Ozodakhon Akramovna²

1. Bukhara International University, PhD teacher at the English Linguistics Department

2. Master's student at Bukhara International University

* Corresponding: n.z.ruziyeva@buxdu.uz, ozodaxonboltaeva@gmail.com

Abstract: This research explores metaphorical expressions in English and Uzbek political discourse through a linguocultural and cognitive lens. The study aims to identify how metaphors function as conceptual tools that shape political thinking and communication in different cultural contexts. Using a qualitative comparative methodology, the research analyzes political speeches, media discourse, and phraseological units in both languages. The findings reveal that while some conceptual metaphors, such as politics as war, journey, and construction, are universal, their linguistic realizations and cultural interpretations differ significantly. English political discourse tends to emphasize competition, individualism, and strategic confrontation, whereas Uzbek political discourse reflects collectivism, stability, and social harmony. The study concludes that metaphorical expressions serve as indicators of national mentality and cultural values, making them essential for understanding cross-cultural political communication.

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1. Introduction

Modern linguistics today focuses heavily on how language, thought, and culture are connected [1]. Political language is a key part of this because it helps shape how people think and how society acts [2]. In this process, metaphors are not just "fancy words"—they are important tools. By comparing abstract political ideas to everyday physical experiences, metaphors help politicians make complex issues easier to understand and persuade people to support certain policies [3]. The way leaders speak reveals their culture's core values. In English-speaking countries, political language often reflects individualism and competition. In contrast, Uzbek political language is based on collectivist traditions, focusing on unity, cooperation, and stability [4]. These different cultural "codes" are built and shared through the specific metaphors that politicians and the media use. This study looks at how metaphors work in both English and Uzbek political speech. It aims to understand how these metaphors function within their respective cultures. To do this, the research has a few main goals — first, it identifies the most common metaphors used in both countries to see how their political stories are built. Second, it looks at how the specific rules of the English and Uzbek languages change how these metaphors are expressed. Finally, the study explains the cultural values and worldviews behind these words. By comparing these two different cultures, the research shows what is the same and what is unique in modern political communication. It demonstrates how the language choices we make act as a bridge between big political ideas and our cultural identity [5].

2. Materials and Methods

This study compares how English and Uzbek politicians use metaphors to explain their ideas. By looking at real examples, the research shows that even when both languages use similar topics, the cultural meaning behind them is very different. English metaphors often focus on winning and individual success, while Uzbek metaphors focus on building a future and acting as one family.

In English-speaking countries, political language is full of metaphors about *War*, *Sports*, and *the Sea*. These images reflect values like competition and the importance of the individual. For example, when Joe Biden used the term “uncivil war” to describe political disagreements, or when Boris Johnson called the pandemic an “invisible enemy”, they were comparing social problems to a physical fight [6]. This makes the issues feel more urgent and serious. Also, British leaders often use sea metaphors like “steadying the ship” during “turbulent waters”. This connects to Britain’s history as a great naval power and shows a leader’s job as keeping everyone safe during a storm [7].

In contrast, Uzbek political language is built on different ideas, focusing on Construction, Nature, and Family. This reflects a culture where the community and sticking together are more important than the individual. The metaphor of “Politics as Construction” is seen in phrases like “mustahkam poydevor” (solid foundation). It suggests that the country is building a grand, permanent structure, like the “Third Renaissance” [8]. While Western “building” metaphors usually sound like fixing or repairing a system, the Uzbek version feels like a sacred, long-term project being built from the ground up. Similarly, nature metaphors like “islohotlar mevasi” (the fruits of reforms) are often linked to the “xonadon” (household). This means that political success is seen as a shared, natural reward for everyone to enjoy together, rather than just a simple list of numbers or statistics [9].

The biggest difference between the two cultures is seen in how they use “Family” metaphors. In English politics, leaders usually keep a professional distance from the people to focus on individual rights. However, in Uzbekistan, it is very common to hear that “xalqimiz bir oiladek” (our people are like one family). This metaphor changes politics from a simple job into a moral duty. It makes the leader feel like a protective guardian and the citizens feel like siblings [10]. This shows that in Uzbek culture, harmony and sticking together are more important than competing with each other. In short, English metaphors are about winning and strategy, while Uzbek metaphors are about unity and taking care of each other [11].

3. Results and Discussion

Metaphors in politics are not just words; they show how each nation thinks based on its own culture. While using metaphors is a natural human process, the specific images a country chooses reveal its unique values and ideology. This selection process acts as a cultural filter, turning abstract ideas into relatable stories for the public. By analyzing these choices, we can understand the hidden psychological motives behind political speeches. To start with, the “Politics as War” metaphor is very popular in both English and Uzbek. In English, phrases like “fighting corruption” or “battle for power” are common, showing politics as a tough competition or a game where one side wins and the other loses [12]. Similarly, Uzbek uses “korruptsiyaga qarshi kurash” (the struggle against corruption), but the meaning is slightly different. While English focuses on aggression and strategy, the Uzbek word *kurash* carries a sense of moral duty and a more formal, defensive tone. In the Western context, this “war” often implies a tactical victory over an opponent to gain authority. In the Uzbek context, however, *kurash* represents a long-standing national effort to protect society from internal and external threats. This highlights a shift from individualistic triumph to a collective sense of justice and preservation.

Following this idea of struggle, leaders also often use the “Politics as a Journey” metaphor to describe national development. In English, phrases like “*the road to success*” or “*moving forward*” focus on how fast an individual can reach a goal. In contrast, Uzbek expressions like “*taraqqiyot yo’li*” (the path of development) have a different feel. For Uzbek speakers, the *yo’l* (path) is about a shared history and moving together as one group. In this view, the unity of the people traveling together is just as important as the final destination [13]. This collective journey suggests that no one should be left behind on the way to prosperity. In English, the journey is often a race where speed and efficiency are the primary measures of success. For the Uzbek people, the “path” is a sacred tradition that connects the glorious past with a bright future. It emphasizes patience and the wisdom of following a proven historical direction.

Moving from the idea of travel to building something solid, the “Politics as Construction” metaphor is a major part of Uzbek political language today. English speakers might talk about “*building the economy*” or “*foundations of democracy*”, but these usually sound like making “repairs” to a system. On the other hand, this metaphor is much stronger in Uzbek. Phrases like “*mustahkam poydevor*” (solid foundation) and “*yangi jamiyat qurish*” (building a new society) create the image of a grand building being started from zero. This reflects a cultural focus on stability and represents the idea of the “Third Renaissance” [14]. This construction imagery gives the public a sense of tangible progress and architectural beauty in governance. While Western leaders focus on fixing existing institutions, Uzbek rhetoric envisions a completely new and magnificent era. Each citizen is invited to feel like a “builder” who contributes a brick to the nation’s grand edifice. This metaphor transforms political reforms into a visible and permanent legacy for the next generation.

Finally, while construction is about buildings, the “Politics as Family” metaphor is about people and shows the biggest difference between the two cultures. In modern English, family metaphors are rare because people prefer a professional distance between the government and the citizens. However, in Uzbek, this is a very important theme. Phrases like “*xalqimiz bir oiladek*” (our people are like a family) show collectivist values. By comparing the nation to a family, political loyalty becomes a moral duty [15]. In this system, the leader is seen as a protective guardian and citizens as siblings, choosing harmony over competition. This family-based model makes political relations feel more personal, warm, and secure. It replaces the cold, legalistic language of the West with the emotional language of kinship and love. In this framework, the state’s success is measured by the happiness and well-being of every “family member”. Ultimately, this metaphor proves that for Uzbek society, the strength of the nation lies in the unbreakable bonds of its people.

4. Conclusion

Understanding how metaphors work in politics is about much more than just studying words; it is a key to truly understanding a nation’s heart and mind. As our world becomes more connected, the ability to decode these “unseen” cultural messages is becoming a vital skill for anyone working in diplomacy, linguistics, or global politics. By looking at how metaphors like “War”, “Journey”, “Construction”, and “Family” are used, we can see the deep values that guide a country’s decisions.

The research provides a strong foundation for future studies to look at how these political patterns might change in the future. For example, as we face global challenges like climate change or the rapid growth of social media, the way leaders use metaphors will likely evolve. Understanding these changes will be essential for better communication and stronger partnerships between different cultures and nations in the years to come.

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