

Metaphorical Representation of Political Position in English And Uzbek Political Discourse

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Abstract: This article investigates the metaphorical representation of political position in English and Uzbek political discourse. Political discourse is not only a means of informing society about political events, reforms, and state policies, but also a powerful instrument for constructing ideological meanings, shaping public perception, and legitimizing political attitudes. Metaphor plays a central role in this process because it allows abstract political concepts such as power, reform, crisis, stability, opposition, development, unity, and national interest to be represented through familiar conceptual domains. The purpose of this article is to analyze how political positions are expressed metaphorically in English and Uzbek political texts and speeches, and to identify similarities and differences in their conceptual and pragmatic functions. The study is based on the principles of cognitive metaphor theory, discourse analysis, and comparative linguistics. The results show that both English and Uzbek political discourse actively employ conceptual metaphors related to journey, war, construction, family, body, light, movement, and struggle. These metaphors help political actors present their own position as progressive, responsible, protective, and nationally significant, while opposing views may be represented as dangerous, backward, destabilizing, or destructive. The article concludes that metaphor is not a decorative linguistic device, but an essential cognitive and pragmatic mechanism for political positioning.

Keywords: Political discourse, metaphor, political position, English discourse, Uzbek discourse, conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, political communication, ideology, discourse analysis.

Introduction: Political discourse is one of the most socially significant forms of communication because it reflects the relationship between language, power, ideology, and public consciousness. Political actors use language not only to describe political reality, but also to interpret it, evaluate it, and influence the audience's perception of events. In this process, metaphor occupies a special place. It enables speakers and writers to explain complex political issues through familiar images and conceptual patterns. Through metaphor, politics may be described as a journey, society as a family, reform as construction, crisis as a storm, the state as a body, and political opposition as conflict or resistance. Such metaphorical representations are not accidental; they shape the way people understand political processes and evaluate

political positions.

The topic of metaphorical representation of political position is especially relevant in comparative linguistics because different languages and cultures use metaphor in both universal and nationally specific ways. English political discourse has been widely studied in relation to conceptual metaphors such as "politics is war," "the nation is a family," "economic development is movement," and "leadership is guidance." Uzbek political discourse also actively employs metaphorical patterns connected with development, renewal, unity, stability, national identity, spiritual values, construction, and progress. However, the linguistic and cultural forms of these metaphors may differ because each political discourse is shaped by historical experience, cultural values, state ideology, and

communicative traditions.

In English political discourse, metaphor is often used to frame competition, policy debate, election campaigns, economic problems, national security, and international relations. Political actors frequently present themselves as leaders who move the country forward, protect citizens, fight challenges, build a better future, or restore national strength. In Uzbek political discourse, metaphorical representation is also closely connected with social development, modernization, national revival, public unity, and the idea of a stable future. Expressions related to “*taraqqiyot yo’li*” (the path of development), “*yangi bosqich*” (a new stage), “*islohotlar poydevori*” (the foundation of reforms), “*xalq bilan muloqot*” (dialogue with the people), and “*ma’naviy uyg’onish*” (spiritual awakening) show how political meanings are conceptualized through culturally meaningful images.

The concept of political position refers to the ideological, strategic, evaluative, and communicative stance of a political actor or institution. It includes how a speaker defines problems, presents solutions, evaluates opponents, constructs collective identity, and justifies political action. Metaphor helps make political position persuasive because it simplifies abstract ideas and gives them emotional force. For example, if reform is represented as a road, then the political actor becomes a guide, the society becomes a group of travelers, and difficulties become obstacles that must be overcome. If political conflict is represented as war, then opponents may be perceived as enemies rather than alternative participants in democratic debate. Thus, metaphor can organize political reality according to a particular ideological perspective.

The aim of this article is to examine the metaphorical representation of political position in English and Uzbek political discourse. The article focuses on the cognitive and pragmatic functions of metaphor and explains how metaphor contributes to the construction of political identity, legitimacy, authority, unity, and opposition. The study also compares the main metaphorical models found in English and Uzbek political discourse in order to reveal both shared conceptual mechanisms and culturally specific features.

The research is based on qualitative discourse analysis,

cognitive metaphor analysis, and comparative linguistic interpretation. The theoretical foundation of the study is conceptual metaphor theory, according to which metaphor is not merely a stylistic ornament but a cognitive mechanism that allows people to understand one conceptual domain through another. This approach, developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, is particularly useful for political discourse analysis because politics contains many abstract concepts that require interpretation through concrete images.

The material for analysis consists of typical examples from English and Uzbek political discourse, including political speeches, public addresses, media commentary, official statements, and analytical texts. The study does not aim to provide a quantitative corpus-based measurement, but rather to identify dominant metaphorical patterns and explain their ideological and communicative functions. The selected examples represent common metaphorical models that appear in political communication in both languages.

The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, metaphorical expressions related to political position were identified in English and Uzbek political texts. Second, these expressions were grouped according to their source domains, such as journey, war, construction, family, body, light, movement, and struggle. Third, the pragmatic functions of these metaphors were interpreted in relation to political positioning. Particular attention was paid to how metaphors help political actors present themselves positively, represent collective identity, justify reforms, evaluate opponents, and influence public opinion. Finally, the English and Uzbek materials were compared to determine similarities and differences in metaphorical conceptualization.

The comparative approach is important because it allows political metaphor to be studied not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a cultural and ideological phenomenon. English and Uzbek political discourse share some universal metaphorical patterns because human cognition often relies on similar embodied experiences such as movement, conflict, construction, light, and family relations. At the same time, Uzbek discourse has specific features connected with national values, collective identity, historical

memory, spirituality, and the rhetoric of social harmony. English political discourse, especially in electoral and parliamentary contexts, often demonstrates stronger competition-oriented and conflict-oriented metaphorical patterns.

The analysis shows that one of the most frequent metaphorical models in both English and Uzbek political discourse is the journey metaphor. Political development is commonly represented as movement along a road, path, direction, or route. In English discourse, expressions such as “the road to recovery,” “moving forward,” “a path to prosperity,” “a new direction,” and “leading the country forward” conceptualize political action as purposeful movement. This metaphor allows political actors to present themselves as guides or leaders who know the correct direction. It also implies that society must continue moving and that stopping or turning back may be harmful.

In Uzbek political discourse, the journey metaphor is also highly productive. Expressions such as “taraqqiyot yo‘li,” “islohotlar yo‘li,” “yangi bosqichga ko‘tarilish,” “kelajak sari intilish,” and “oldinga harakat” represent political development as movement toward a desired future. This metaphor is usually associated with progress, modernization, state reforms, and national goals. The political position expressed through this metaphor is positive and constructive: the speaker presents reforms as a necessary movement and society as an active participant in this movement. The metaphor also creates a sense of continuity, suggesting that development is not a single event but a long-term process.

Another important metaphorical model is the construction metaphor. In both languages, political activity is often described as building, strengthening, laying foundations, creating structures, and constructing the future. English political discourse uses expressions such as “building a stronger economy,” “laying the foundations for growth,” “rebuilding trust,” and “constructing a better future.” These metaphors present political work as practical, rational, and goal-oriented. The political actor appears as a builder or architect who creates stability and order.

In Uzbek political discourse, construction metaphors are especially significant because they correspond to

the rhetoric of renewal and development. Expressions such as “islohotlar poydevori,” “yangi jamiyat qurish,” “davlat boshqaruvi tizimini mustahkamlash,” “kelajak binosini barpo etish,” and “taraqqiyot asoslarini yaratish” frame political activity as the creation of a stable social structure. The concept of “poydevor,” meaning foundation, is particularly meaningful because it suggests durability, seriousness, and historical responsibility. Through this metaphor, political position is represented as constructive and future-oriented. A political actor who “builds” is implicitly contrasted with forces that “destroy,” “weaken,” or “obstruct.”

The war and struggle metaphor is another powerful model in political discourse. In English, political debate is often described through conflict-related language: “fighting for justice,” “battle against corruption,” “war on poverty,” “defending democracy,” “attacking a policy,” or “winning the campaign.” This metaphor is persuasive because it creates emotional intensity and divides political space into allies and opponents. When a political actor frames a problem as an enemy, strong action becomes justified. However, such metaphors may also polarize public opinion because they reduce complex political disagreement to confrontation.

In Uzbek political discourse, struggle metaphors also exist, but they are often connected with social problems rather than direct party competition. Expressions such as “korrupsiyaga qarshi kurash,” “jaholatga qarshi kurash,” “kambag‘allikni qisqartirish yo‘lidagi sa‘y-harakatlar,” and “salbiy illatlarga qarshi kurashish” represent politics as moral and social struggle. The political position constructed through this metaphor emphasizes responsibility, protection, and reformist determination. Compared with English electoral discourse, Uzbek political discourse tends to use conflict metaphors less for direct personal confrontation and more for collective mobilization against negative phenomena.

The family metaphor also plays a major role in both English and Uzbek political discourse. In English political rhetoric, the nation may be represented as a family, citizens as members of a common household, and the leader as a protective figure. The metaphor “the nation is a family” has been studied extensively in cognitive linguistics because it helps explain political ideology. Conservative and progressive discourses may use

different family models, such as strict father or nurturing parent. Political position is represented through ideas of responsibility, care, discipline, protection, and solidarity.

In Uzbek political discourse, the family metaphor is deeply connected with national mentality and social values. The state and society are often represented through images of unity, mutual support, respect, and collective responsibility. Words and expressions related to “*xalq*,” “*oila*,” “*mahalla*,” “*birdamlik*,” “*hamjihatlik*,” and “*mehr-oqibat*” create a metaphorical image of society as a moral community. This metaphorical representation supports political positions that emphasize social harmony, intergenerational continuity, respect for elders, care for youth, and national solidarity. It also gives political discourse an ethical dimension because political decisions are interpreted through the values of responsibility and care.

The body metaphor is also present in political discourse. In English, the state or society may be described as a body that can be healthy, weak, wounded, recovering, or infected by social problems. Expressions such as “a healthy democracy,” “economic recovery,” “a wounded nation,” and “corruption as a disease” show how political conditions are conceptualized through bodily experience. This metaphor allows political actors to present themselves as healers who diagnose problems and offer treatment.

In Uzbek political discourse, similar metaphors can be found in expressions related to social health, spiritual health, and the strengthening of society. Problems such as corruption, indifference, extremism, and moral decline may be described as “*illat*,” “*kasallik*,” or “*zararli ta’sir*.” Reforms, education, spirituality, and law are presented as means of healing or strengthening society. This metaphorical model constructs political position as therapeutic and protective. The political actor becomes someone who cares for the health of the nation and seeks to remove harmful elements.

Light and darkness metaphors are also common in political communication. In English discourse, political change may be described as “a bright future,” “hope,” “transparency,” “dark times,” or “bringing issues to light.” These metaphors are connected with knowledge, truth, openness, and optimism. They help

political actors present their position as morally positive and future-oriented.

In Uzbek political discourse, light metaphors have strong cultural and spiritual resonance. Words such as “*nur*,” “*ziyolilik*,” “*ma’rifat*,” “*uyg’onish*,” and “*yorug’ kelajak*” connect politics with enlightenment, education, morality, and national revival. A political position represented through light metaphors becomes associated with progress, knowledge, and spiritual improvement. Darkness, in contrast, may symbolize ignorance, backwardness, extremism, or social stagnation. Thus, light metaphors perform not only political but also cultural and moral functions.

The analysis also demonstrates that metaphorical representation of political position is closely connected with the construction of “us” and “them.” Political actors use metaphors to define who belongs to the positive collective and who represents threat, resistance, or backwardness. In English political discourse, opponents may be represented as obstacles, attackers, enemies, or forces pulling the country backward. In Uzbek discourse, negative forces are often represented through metaphors of harmful influence, social illness, darkness, or obstruction of development. In both cases, metaphor helps create evaluative contrast and supports the speaker’s position as necessary, legitimate, and beneficial.

The results confirm that metaphor is a central mechanism of political positioning in both English and Uzbek political discourse. It does not simply decorate political speech; it organizes political meaning and guides interpretation. When political development is represented as a journey, the audience is encouraged to think in terms of direction, leadership, obstacles, and destination. When reform is represented as construction, people perceive it as a process requiring foundation, planning, labor, and stability. When social problems are represented as enemies or diseases, political action appears as struggle or treatment. In each case, metaphor frames reality in a way that supports a particular political position.

The comparison between English and Uzbek political discourse shows that many metaphorical models are shared. Journey, construction, war, family, body, and light metaphors appear in both languages because they are based on universal human experiences. People

understand movement, conflict, building, family relations, health, and light through everyday embodied experience. Therefore, these domains become convenient tools for explaining abstract political concepts. This confirms the cognitive linguistic idea that metaphor is rooted in human conceptualization rather than only in literary style.

At the same time, the use and emphasis of metaphors differ according to cultural and political context. English political discourse, especially in democratic election campaigns and parliamentary debates, often uses competition-oriented metaphors. Political position is frequently constructed through confrontation, debate, victory, defense, and challenge. This reflects the institutional culture of party competition and public argumentation. Uzbek political discourse, by contrast, tends to emphasize unity, development, renewal, stability, spirituality, and social harmony. Conflict metaphors are used, but they are usually directed against social problems rather than political opponents. This difference shows that metaphorical representation is shaped not only by language structure but also by political culture and communicative norms.

The journey metaphor in Uzbek discourse has a particularly strong connection with national development. Expressions related to the path of reforms and movement toward the future create a collective vision of progress. The political position expressed through this metaphor encourages social participation and patience, because development is understood as a long road that requires unity and perseverance. In English discourse, the journey metaphor may also express progress, but it is often used to distinguish one party's "direction" from another's. Thus, the same metaphorical model can serve different pragmatic functions.

The construction metaphor in both languages legitimizes political authority by presenting political actors as builders of stability and progress. This metaphor is powerful because building requires skill, responsibility, and planning. It also suggests that political results must be durable and visible. In Uzbek discourse, construction metaphors are closely associated with state reforms, modernization, and the creation of a new stage of development. In English discourse, they may be used in relation to economic

recovery, institutional reform, or national renewal. In both cases, the metaphor supports a positive self-presentation of the political actor.

The war metaphor is more ambivalent. On the one hand, it mobilizes people and shows determination. On the other hand, it may simplify political reality and encourage polarization. In English discourse, war metaphors are often used in election campaigns and ideological debates, where political opponents may be implicitly or explicitly represented as enemies. In Uzbek discourse, struggle metaphors are more often directed toward corruption, poverty, ignorance, extremism, or other social threats. This creates a moral frame in which political action is presented as protection of society.

The family metaphor reveals an important cultural dimension of political discourse. In Uzbek political communication, the family metaphor resonates strongly with traditional values, respect, solidarity, and collective responsibility. It helps represent political position as caring, morally justified, and socially inclusive. In English discourse, family metaphors are also important, but they are often interpreted through ideological models of authority and care. The same conceptual domain may therefore produce different political meanings depending on cultural context.

The body and health metaphor is effective because it makes social problems appear urgent and concrete. If corruption is a disease, then it must be treated. If the economy is recovering, then policy becomes a form of therapy. If society is healthy, then political leadership appears successful. This metaphor gives political discourse a diagnostic structure: the speaker identifies a problem, explains its danger, and proposes a solution. In Uzbek discourse, this metaphor often combines political and moral meanings, especially when social problems are described as harmful "ills" that must be eliminated through education, law, and spirituality.

Light metaphors show the connection between politics, knowledge, morality, and future orientation. In both languages, light is associated with hope, truth, openness, and progress. In Uzbek discourse, however, light metaphors often have a stronger spiritual and educational meaning. Concepts such as enlightenment, awakening, and bright future connect political development with moral and intellectual

improvement. This shows that metaphorical representation of political position is deeply embedded in cultural values.

The study also demonstrates that metaphor has a manipulative potential, although this article focuses mainly on representation rather than manipulation. Because metaphor highlights some aspects of reality and hides others, it can influence how people evaluate political events. A policy described as a “foundation for the future” sounds necessary and constructive, while the same policy described as a “burden” may sound problematic. An opponent described as an “obstacle” is perceived differently from an opponent described as an “alternative voice.” Thus, metaphor has evaluative power. It helps political actors control the interpretive frame within which their position is understood.

For linguistic research, the comparative study of English and Uzbek political metaphors is valuable because it reveals how universal cognitive patterns interact with national discourse traditions. It also shows that political metaphor should be studied at the intersection of cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, cultural linguistics, and political communication. For practical language education, such analysis is useful because it helps students understand implicit meanings in political texts and develop critical discourse awareness.

Metaphorical representation of political position is an essential feature of English and Uzbek political discourse. Political actors use metaphors to explain abstract ideas, justify policies, construct collective identity, evaluate opponents, and persuade the audience. The most common metaphorical models include politics as journey, reform as construction, politics as struggle, nation as family, society as body, and progress as light. These metaphors allow political speakers to present their position as progressive, protective, responsible, constructive, and morally justified.

The comparative analysis shows that English and Uzbek political discourse share many conceptual metaphors because they are based on universal human experience. However, their pragmatic use differs according to cultural and political context. English discourse more frequently emphasizes competition, conflict, debate, and ideological distinction, while

Uzbek discourse more strongly emphasizes unity, development, stability, renewal, spirituality, and collective responsibility. These differences demonstrate that metaphor is both a cognitive and cultural phenomenon.

The study concludes that metaphor should be regarded not as an ornamental element of political language, but as a strategic mechanism of political positioning. It shapes public understanding of political reality and influences the way audiences interpret political actors, reforms, problems, and national goals. Further research may be conducted on a larger corpus of English and Uzbek political speeches, media texts, and official documents in order to identify the frequency, distribution, and evolution of metaphorical models in political communication.

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