



THE LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN UZBEK PERIODICALS

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Abstract

This article investigates the linguocultural features of conceptual metaphors in Uzbek periodicals (newspapers and magazines). Using cognitive linguistics and linguocultural discourse analysis, the study examines how metaphorical framing helps media discourse construct meaning about abstract domains such as development, governance, national identity, and the future. The analysis shows that Uzbek periodicals repeatedly draw on culturally resonant source domains—such as journeys (progress), construction (reforms), living organisms (institutions), heritage (identity), and light/hope (future optimism). These metaphors are not merely rhetorical devices; they function as cognitive mechanisms and persuasive strategies that reflect cultural values, moral evaluations, and collective ideology. (Kövecses, 2002, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

Keywords: conceptual metaphor; linguoculture; media discourse; Uzbek; periodicals; cognitive linguistics

1. Introduction

Metaphor has long been regarded as a stylistic phenomenon, but cognitive linguistic research shows that metaphor is fundamentally a cognitive tool used to structure human understanding. In this view, conceptual metaphor is a mapping between domains of experience: a more concrete **source domain** is used to



conceptualize an abstract **target domain**. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999)

In public communication, especially the media, these conceptual mappings become visible in recurring patterns of wording and framing. Periodicals do not only report events; they interpret them and influence how readers conceptualize social reality. Because culture shapes how people experience the world, metaphors also carry **linguocultural meaning**, including culturally specific values, priorities, and moral interpretations. (Kövecses, 2010)

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative cognitive-linguistic and linguocultural discourse approach.

1. **Data and sampling.** Excerpts were selected from Uzbek periodicals (news reports, analytical articles, and interpretive genres) that discuss topics such as reforms, development strategies, public institutions, national identity, and social change.
2. **Metaphor identification.** Potential metaphorical expressions were identified using a discourse-based method consistent with metaphor identification principles (e.g., distinguishing metaphorically used words from literal usage). (Pragglejaz Group, 2007)
3. **Conceptual grouping.** The extracted metaphorical expressions were grouped according to conceptual mappings (source → target) to determine the underlying conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphor theory and mapping principles guide this step. (Barcelona, 2003; Kövecses, 2002)
4. **Linguocultural analysis.** For each conceptual metaphor, linguocultural features were interpreted by examining: (a) culturally meaningful lexical



choices, (b) evaluative tone (positive/negative moral framing), and (c) narrative framing that links current events with cultural and historical continuity. Since metaphor and culture are closely connected, these interpretations focus on culturally grounded meaning rather than purely linguistic patterning. (Kövecses, 2010)

3. Results and Discussion

The analysis indicates that Uzbek periodicals frequently conceptualize key social realities using structured metaphoric frames. While some metaphors are widely attested cross-linguistically (e.g., progress as a journey), the Uzbek media realization shows linguocultural specificity in the selection of source imagery, the evaluative stance, and the narrative emphasis.

3.1. INSTITUTIONS / SOCIETY AS A LIVING ORGANISM

A prominent metaphor represents institutions or society as a living being that can be healthy, weakened, strengthened, or “repaired.” This frame is often used to make complex institutional reforms more understandable by treating change as something that restores proper function.

Linguocultural features:

reforms are legitimized through a “care/healing/strengthening” logic,

the metaphor encourages readers to view governance and institutions as morally responsible for social well-being,

the emphasis is frequently collective: improving the “system” supports everyone.



Such conceptualization aligns with the broader idea that metaphor structures abstract domains through systematic mappings. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2002)

3.2. DEVELOPMENT / REFORMS AS A JOURNEY OR PATH

Uzbek periodicals often describe development and modernization through movement imagery such as roads, directions, stages, and forward progress. In this conceptual frame, the nation or society is “moving” toward goals, and reforms are the steps that guide that movement.

Linguocultural features:

progress is narrativized as step-by-step advancement,

collective agency is activated (the “we” perspective),

temporal structure appears through “stages” and “next steps,” creating a sense of continuity and purposeful change.

This supports the claim that conceptual metaphor is not only cognitive but also culturally shaped in how it organizes social narratives. (Kövecses, 2010)

3.3. CHANGE AS CONSTRUCTION

Another recurring conceptual metaphor frames reforms as construction: building foundations, creating structures, and constructing systems. This metaphor reduces the complexity of policy by transforming abstract governance into practical building work.

Linguocultural features:

productive ideology (“building” and “creating”) rather than destruction-oriented framing,



emphasis on planning and responsibility,

implicit moral evaluation: effective reform is depicted as grounded work that produces stability.

Corpus-based metaphor approaches in discourse analysis highlight that such patterns are characteristic of how media legitimizes certain actions and interpretations. (Charteris-Black, 2004)

3.4. Functions of Conceptual Metaphors in Uzbek Periodicals

Across metaphor categories, conceptual metaphors perform several interconnected discourse functions:

1. **Cognitive function:** They simplify abstract issues (policy, governance, reform outcomes) into concrete frames understandable through everyday experience. (Kövecses, 2002)
2. **Ideological function:** They legitimize preferred interpretations by embedding evaluation (good/necessary/healthy/protective). (Charteris-Black, 2004)
3. **Persuasive function:** They motivate readers by activating hope, stability, and collective responsibility. (Steen, 2011)
4. **Narrative and identity functions:** They structure discourse around progress, continuity, and national belonging.

4. Conclusion

This article demonstrates that Uzbek periodicals employ conceptual metaphors that are strongly shaped by linguocultural factors. Common metaphorical frames—society as organism, development as journey, reforms as construction, history as heritage, and the future as light—help media discourse interpret abstract social and political realities. These metaphors also work persuasively: they support moral



evaluation, collective ideology, and continuity between historical identity and future development. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010; Charteris-Black, 2004)

Implications: The findings contribute to research on the interaction of metaphor, cognition, and culture in media discourse, and they offer a basis for more detailed corpus-based studies of metaphor frequency, variation across genres, and changes over time. (Steen et al., 2010; Steen, 2011)

Limitations and future research: The present study is qualitative and relies on excerpt analysis. Future research could:

conduct corpus-based quantitative analysis of metaphor frequency and distribution,

compare metaphors across different Uzbek periodicals or time periods,

investigate translation effects (e.g., Uzbek media influenced by Russian/English media frames).

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