



Received: April 2, 2026  
Accepted: May 23, 2026  
Available online: May 25, 2026

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### **METAPHORS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A LINGUOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE SPEECHES OF SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV AND DONALD TRUMP**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Political discourse is rich in metaphors, which function not as mere stylistic flourishes but as culturally embedded cognitive devices that shape political realities, legitimate authority, and unify collective identities. Within this framework metaphors as linguoculturemes activate culturally charged frames that incline audiences toward a preferred interpretation.

This study aims to identify, classify, and comparatively analyze metaphors as linguoculturemes in the official presidential speeches of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the President of the United States of America Donald Trump delivered during 2025. The specific tasks of this study are: (1) to identify the dominant metaphorical clusters in the speeches of both presidents; (2) to analyze these metaphors as linguoculturemes by tracing their cultural sources and the presuppositions they activate; and (3) to compare the structural organization, thematic focus, and discourse functions of the two metaphorical systems.

The study adopts a qualitative-interpretive methodology that integrates three complementary frameworks: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Metaphor Analysis and Linguocultural Analysis. Metaphorical expressions were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), grouped into cultureme-based clusters, and analyzed through contextual and intertextual methods. The corpus comprises

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### **O'ZBEK VA INGLIZ SIYOSIY DISKURSIDAGI METAFORALAR: SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV VA DONALD TRAMP NUTQLARIGA LINGVOMADANIY NIGOH**

#### **ANNOTATSIYA**

Siyosiy diskurs metaforalarga boy bo'lib, ular faqat oddiy uslubiy bezak bo'libgina qolmay, balki siyosiy voqelikni shakllantiradigan, hokimiyatni qonuniylashtiradigan va jamoaviy ruhni birlashtiradigan madaniy singdirilgan kognitiv vositalar hamdir. Ushbu doirada metaforalar lingvokulturema sifatida til va madaniy ma'noni birlashtiradi hamda auditoriyani siyosatchi o'zi istagan maqsadga og'diruvchi madaniy qoliqlarni faollashtiradi.

Ushbu tadqiqot O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti Shavkat Mirziyoyev va Amerika Qo'shma Shtatlari Prezidenti Donald Trampning rasmiy nutqlarida metaforalarni lingvokulturemalar sifatida aniqlash, tasniflash va qiyosiy tahlil qilishni maqsad qiladi. Tadqiqotning aniq maqsadlari: (1) ikkala prezident nutqlaridagi asosiy metaforik klasterlarni aniqlash; (2) metaforalarni lingvokulturema sifatida ularning madaniy manbalari va faollashtirilgan yashirin taxminlarini aniqlash orqali tahlil qilish; (3) ikki metaforik tizimning strukturaviy tashkil etilishi, tematik yo'nalishi va diskursiv funksiyalarini qiyoslash.

Tadqiqot uch o'zaro bir-birini to'ldiruvchi nazariy tizimni birlashtirgan sifatli-talqiniy metodologiyaga asoslanadi: konseptual metafora nazariyasi, tanqidiy diskurs tahlili va lingvomadaniy tahlil. Metaforik ifodalar metaforani aniqlash tartibi (MIP) yordamida aniqlanib, kulturema asosidagi klasterlarga guruhlangan va kontekstual hamda intertekstual

six speeches in total – three by Sh.Mirziyoyev (approximately 20,000 words) and three by D.Trump (approximately 21,000 words).

The results reveal that Sh.Mirziyoyev's metaphorical system is grounded in a multi-layered cultureme structure drawing on Islamic-spiritual, Turkic-nomadic, mahalla-communal, post-Soviet mobilisational, historical-dynastic and ecocultural strata, while D.Trump's metaphors are rooted in American civil religion, frontier mythology and populist anti-institutionalism.

The study concludes that both leaders deploy metaphors as instruments of civilizational assertion and political legitimization, yet the cultural reservoirs they draw upon are fundamentally divergent; linguocultureme analysis of presidential discourse provides access to the deepest levels of political meaning.

**Key words:** linguocultureme, conceptual metaphor, political discourse, comparative analysis, critical metaphor analysis, cross-cultural pragmatics, cultural grounding, ideological framing, Uzbek political language, American political rhetoric.

usullar bilan tahlil qilingan. Korpus jami oltita nutqdan iborat – Sh.Mirziyoyevning uchta (taxminan 20 000 ta soʻz) va D.Trampning uchta nutqi (taxminan ta 21 000 soʻz).

Natijalar shuni koʻrsatadiki, Sh.Mirziyoyevning metaforik tizimi islomiy-ma'naviy, turk-ko'chmanchi, mahalla-jamoatchilik, sovet davridan keyingi safarbarlik, tarixiy-sulolaviy va ekologik-madaniy qatlamlarga tayangan ko'p qatlamli kulturema tuzilmasiga asoslangan, D.Trampning metaforalari esa Amerika fuqarolik dini, chegara mifologiyasi va populistik davlat tuzilmalariga qarshi qarashlardan kelib chiqadi.

Xulosa qilib aytganda, ikkala rahbar ham metaforalarni oʻz sivilizatsiyasini namoyish etish va siyosiy hokimiyatini oqlash vositasi sifatida ishlatadi. Ammo ular suyanadigan madaniy manbalar tubdan farq qiladi. Prezident nutqlarini lingvokulturema nuqtayi nazaridan tahlil qilish siyosiy ma'no yaratilishining eng chuqur qatlamlariga yetib borish imkonini beradi – bu oddiy ritorik yoki leksik tahlil bilan erishib bo'lmaydigan narsa.

**Kalit soʻzlar:** lingvokulturema, konseptual metafora, siyosiy diskurs, qiyosiy tahlil, tanqidiy metafora tahlili, madaniyatlararo pragmatika, madaniy asoslanish, mafkuraviy freymlashtirish, o'zbek siyosiy tili, Amerika siyosiy ritorikasi.

## INTRODUCTION

Political discourse represents one of the most richly metaphorical domains of language use, and the study of political language has long occupied a central position in both linguistics and political science. As cognitive linguistics demonstrates, language functions as the primary instrument through which political actors construct social realities, legitimize authority, and mobilize collective identities [Safarov & Akbarov, 2016]. Presidential discourse is where this process is most visible and most consequential: it is the most institutionally authoritative form of political communication, addressed simultaneously to domestic populations, regional neighbors, and international audiences whose cultural assumptions may differ sharply. Understanding how political metaphors work – and how deeply they are rooted in specific cultural histories – is therefore not merely an academic question. It bears directly on how political messages travel across languages and what is gained or lost in translation.

Two scholarly traditions have grappled seriously with this question, though largely without talking to each other. The first is the anglophone cognitive-critical tradition. American linguists G.Lakoff and M.Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* established the foundational insight that metaphor is not a literary ornament but a basic

structure of human thought [Lakoff & Johnson, 2003]. Uzbek linguists D.Ashurova and M.Galieva extend this view, describing metaphor as “*a form of conceptualization, a cognitive process that generates and shapes new knowledge*” [Ashurova & Galieva, 2024]. British cognitive linguist and discourse analyst P.Chilton applied this to political discourse specifically, showing that political metaphors do not merely describe a pre-existing reality but actively construct it [Chilton, 2004]. British linguist J.Charteris–Black then developed corpus-based methods for identifying and analyzing these metaphors systematically, demonstrating how speakers use them to legitimize power and delegitimize rivals [Charteris–Black, 2004]. Hungarian cognitive linguist Z.Kövecses added an important corrective: although some metaphorical mappings appear universal, the specific shapes they take are culturally variable in ways that matter [Kövecses, 2005]. C.Schäffner and S.Bassnett argue that translation is not merely a technical linguistic process but an active force in shaping how political discourse is represented, reframed, and recontextualized across cultural boundaries [Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010]. The second tradition was developed within Russian and post–Soviet linguistics. The concept of the *linguocultureme* – formulated by linguist V.Vorobyov as a unit that fuses linguistic form, conceptual meaning, and cultural memory into a single inseparable whole [Vorobyov, 1997] – captures exactly the dimension of political metaphor that cognitive approaches tend to underspecify. This idea finds a parallel in F.Sharifian’s concept of “cultural conceptualization,” which similarly argues that culturally encoded linguistic units must be read not merely lexically but together with their historical, political, and ideological dimensions [Sharifian, 2017]. Foundational figures in linguoculturology, linguists V.Maslova and V.Teliya showed how figurative expressions serve as primary vehicles for cultural identity [Maslova, 2001; Teliya, 1996]; V.Karasik linked such cultural concepts to the ideological and value dimensions of discourse [Karasik, 2002]. The two traditions are genuinely complementary: anglophone critical metaphor analysis is precise about cognitive structure and discourse function, while linguocultural analysis goes deeper into cultural memory and untranslatable specificity.

Reviewing the existing literature reveals three concrete gaps. The most striking is the near-absence of comparative research on Uzbek and English political rhetoric in international scholarship. Uzbek political discourse is rich with culturally distinctive resources that have no real equivalents in Western political language and have received less attention in cross-cultural studies [Wodak, 2015; Hart & Cap, 2014]. The second gap concerns the *linguocultureme* concept itself: although it has been used productively in analyses of literary and phraseological material, its application to live contemporary political speech remains underdeveloped. The third gap is methodological. As M.Cronin and J.Munday observe, political metaphors are significantly transformed when they cross linguistic and cultural boundaries through translation and media dissemination – sometimes amplified, sometimes stripped of meaning [Cronin, 2003; Munday, 2012]. But we cannot understand how or why this happens without first mapping the cultural foundations of the original metaphors, which has not been done for the two political traditions compared here. Taken together,

these gaps point to a single underlying problem: the lack of an integrated framework capable of capturing and comparing the culturally specific metaphorical systems of leaders from fundamentally different civilizational traditions. This study sets out to fill these gaps by comparing the metaphorical systems of two contemporary presidents whose rhetorical styles are among the most discussed in current political life.

## METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative–interpretive design to explore how political metaphors carry cultural meaning. The presence of metaphor in language stems from metaphorical thought, and its comprehension is made possible by the shared system of fundamental concepts within a given cultural and linguistic community [Abdulxakova & Bazarbaeva, 2025]. The integration of J.Lakoff and M.Johnson, Z.Kövecses, J.Charteris–Black, V.Vorobyov, F.Sharifian, V.Maslova, V.Karasik and C.Schäffner and S.Bassnett’s frameworks enables analysis at the intersection of cognition, culture, and linguistic transfer – the triple analytical space where the linguocultureme operates.

### Corpus description

Presidential discourse is the focus because it aims for broad resonance, addresses multiple audiences, and actively constructs national identity. The study compares English–language speeches by D.Trump and Uzbek speeches by President Sh.Mirziyoyev, alongside their official English translations. The primary corpus consists of six presidential speeches in total: three speeches by Sh.Mirziyoyev and three speeches by D.Trump. The Sh.Mirziyoyev corpus comprises approximately 20,000 words of original Uzbek political text, of which the English translations provided in the source materials have been used for comparative analysis. The D.Trump corpus comprises approximately 21,000 words of original English text. The speeches were selected to represent different rhetorical contexts (domestic address, international forum, legislative address) for both speakers, enabling comparison not only across cultures but also across rhetorical situations.

### Procedure

The analytical procedure followed four sequential stages. In the first stage, metaphorical expressions were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group and further systematized by Steen et al., which involves identifying words used in a non–literal sense whose contextual meaning can be understood in relation to a more basic sense [Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Steen et al., 2010]. The following worked example demonstrates how MIP was applied to a single sentence drawn from Sh.Mirziyoyev’s Address to the Oliy Majlis (26.12.2025): “*We have laid a strong foundation for our further reforms.*” The word “*laid*” in context means “*established*” (referring to policy groundwork); its most basic meaning is the physical act of placing something flat, such as laying bricks or stones. The contextual meaning contrasts with but can be understood through this physical sense, so “*laid*” is marked metaphorically used. Similarly, “*foundation*” in context means “*the basis for future policy*”; its most basic meaning refers to the physical base of a building. Again, the contextual meaning is understood through the

basic sense, and “*foundation*” is marked metaphorically used. The word “*strong*” in context means “*solid, reliable*”; in its most basic physical sense it describes structural or material strength. The contextual meaning is understood through the physical sense, so “*strong*” is also marked metaphorically used. The words “*we*”, “*have*”, “*a*”, “*for*”, “*our*”, “*further*” and “*reforms*” are not used metaphorically in this sentence and are left unmarked. The three identified metaphorical words cluster around the source domain CONSTRUCTION, which maps onto the target domain NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – a mapping that recurs systematically across the corpus and is analyzed in Section 3.1.1. Borderline cases – for instance, whether “*further*” activates a spatial PATH metaphor or functions as a non-metaphorical adverb – were resolved by checking whether the spatial sense was conceptually active in context or merely conventionalized to transparency; only the former were marked. To establish reliability, a sample of 15% of the total corpus (approximately 6,150 words, drawn proportionally from both sub-corpora) was independently coded by a second trained analyst unfamiliar with the study’s hypotheses. Inter-coder agreement was calculated using Cohen’s kappa ( $\kappa$ ). The initial kappa value was  $\kappa = .81$ , indicating strong agreement [Landis & Koch, 1977]. The 19% of borderline cases in which the two coders disagreed – for instance, whether “*further*” activates a spatial PATH metaphor or functions as a non-metaphorical adverb – were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached, and the more conservative interpretation was preferred where consensus could not be fully established, following the reliability protocol recommended by Steen et al. [Steen et al, 2010]. The final agreed coding was then applied consistently to the remainder of the corpus by the primary analyst. In the second stage, the identified metaphors were grouped into clusters based on shared source domains, following the methodology of J.Charteris-Black. In the third stage, each cluster was analyzed as a linguocultureme by identifying its cultural source materials – historical events, religious traditions, folk concepts, national myths – using contextual and intertextual analysis. In the fourth stage, the two metaphorical systems were compared systematically along the dimensions of source domain distribution, cultural stratum activation, and discourse function.

## RESULTS

### Metaphorical Clusters in Shavkat Mirziyoyev’s Speeches

For analysis of metaphorical language, three specific speeches from President Sh.Mirziyoyev’s broader corpus are selected. These particular addresses (Address to the Oliy Majlis to the Iftar Ceremony (25.03.2025); OTS Summit, Gabala (07.10.2025); Address to Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan (26.12.2025)) were chosen to represent a spectrum of communicative contexts, each defined by a distinct occasion, audience, and primary register. This selection allows for a focused examination of how metaphors shift across different political, diplomatic, and ceremonial settings within a single year.

Analysis of the three Sh.Mirziyoyev speeches yielded eighteen primary metaphorical expressions within seven categories, which were grouped into five major



cultureme-based clusters. The following table presents the most significant clusters with illustrative examples from the corpus (See Table 1):

*Table 1. Inventory of metaphors analysed*

ID	Metaphor	Category	Speech
M1	Path of Development	Path/Journey	Speech 3
M2	Building Bridges of Cooperation	Path/Journey	Speech 3
M3	Roadmap for Generations	Path/Journey	Speech 3
M4	Era of Closed Borders Is in the Past	Path/Journey	Speech 2
M5	Economy as Living Body (Growth, Reshaping, Engine)	Organism/Living body	Speech 3
M6	Poverty Reduction as a Nationwide Movement / Lifting People Out	Organism/Living body	Speech 3
M7	Building New Uzbekistan	Construction/Building	Speech 3
M8	Foundation / Gold Reserves as Strong Foundation	Construction/Building	Speech 3
M9	Brotherly Nations / Dear Brothers	Family/Kinship	Speech 2
M10	Mahalla as Close as the Family Home	Family/Kinship	Speech 3
M11	Motherland / Sacred Land	Family/Kinship	Speech 1 & 3
M12	Silk Road / Crossroads of Civilisations	Historical/Ancestral	Speech 2
M13	Amir Temur's Diplomatic Precedent	Historical/Ancestral	Speech 2
M14	Star Map → Roadmap (Ulugbek Parallel)	Historical/Ancestral	Speech 3
M15	Shoulder to Shoulder	Solidarity/Unity	Speech 3
M16	United as One Nation/Single Idea	Solidarity/Unity	Speech 3
M17	Aral Sea Desiccation as Civilisational Responsibility	Water/Nature	Speech 1
M18	Green Wall / Planting Green Cover	Water/Nature	Speech 3

### **The construction/path metaphor (REFORM IS A JOURNEY/BUILDING)**

The most pervasive metaphorical cluster in Sh.Mirziyoyev's domestic address is the conceptual mapping of national development onto physical construction and spatial movement. Expressions such as *"to go through a significant path of development"* – *"katta taraqqiyot yo'lini bosib o'tish"*, *"to build bridges of cooperation"* – *"hamkorlik ko'priklarini qurish"*, *"the roadmap guarantees the future"* – *"baxtli hayotga olib boradigan yo'l xaritasi"*, *"the era of closed borders"* – *"yopiq chegaralar davri"*, *"a decisive stage in building the New Uzbekistan"* – *"Yangi O'zbekistonni barpo etishda hal qiluvchi bosqich"* and *"a strong foundation of our further reforms"* – *"islohotlarimiz uchun mustahkam moliyaviy baza"* systematically construct political reform as both a journey with a clear trajectory and a building with structural integrity. This double metaphorization – JOURNEY AND CONSTRUCTION – is characteristic of Uzbek political discourse and draws simultaneously on the Islamic concept of the *sirat* (path) and on the historical Uzbek–Timurid tradition of monumental architectural achievement as the expression of political legitimacy. The expression *"gold reserves as a strong foundation"* exemplifies how financial metaphors are embedded within constructional frames to create the impression of tangible, durable progress.

### **The organism metaphor (ORGANISM / LIVING BODY)**

The metaphor “Economy as Living Body” clarifies the tension between organic and mechanical domains as a conceptual blend reflecting historical–economic transition (e.g., “...*our country’s economy continues to grow confidently and steadily*” – *mamlakatimiz iqtisodiyoti ishonchli va barqaror o‘shida davom etmoqda*”). Analysed as a linguocultureme, this metaphor does more than describe economic performance; it activates deep cultural schemas of vitality, natural growth, and collective health. In Uzbek political discourse, the body metaphor carries specific cultural weight: an economy that “grows” and “moves confidently” implies not mere statistical increase but organic, life-affirming development rooted in the land and its people. Unlike mechanical metaphors of economic engineering (common in Western neoliberal discourse), the living body frame resonates with traditional Turkic and Islamic notions of community as a natural, interconnected whole. “Poverty Reduction as Nationwide Movement” explicitly identifies POVERTY IS A PIT as the underlying conceptual metaphor; defined “*movement*” – “*harakat*” as a palimpsestic cultureme. As a linguocultureme, “*movement*” carries layered historical meanings: it evokes the Soviet-era mobilisational lexicon and the post-independence language of national revival (*Milliy tiklanish harakati*). This palimpsestic quality means that each use of “*movement*” activates multiple cultural strata simultaneously – secular and sacred, Soviet and national, collective and individual. Together, these linguoculturemes construct poverty not as individual failure but as a communal challenge requiring national solidarity, state leadership, and historical purpose.

### **The mahalla – family metaphor (THE NATION IS A MAHALLA/FAMILY)**

The mahalla – the traditional Uzbek neighborhood community organization – functions as the irreducible master linguocultureme of Sh.Mirziyoyev’s political discourse. Phrases such as “*mahalla as close to us as the family home*” (“*barchamiz uchun ham ota, ham ona bo‘lgan mahalla*”), “*true sons of our sacred land*” (“*muqaddas zaminimizning asl farzandlari*”), “*the mahalla system based on unity*” (“*hamjihatlik asosi bo‘lgan mahalla*”), “*bringing our brotherly nations even closer together*” (“*qardosh xalqlarimizni yanada yaqinlashtirish*”), “*shoulder-to-shoulder solidarity*” (“*yelkadoshlik*”), “*if we remain united, acting as one nation*” (“*bir bo‘lsak, yagona xalq, yagona millat bo‘lib olg‘a intilsak*”) and the designation of 2026 as the “*Year of Mahalla Development*” position the mahalla not merely as an administrative unit but as the fundamental molecule of national identity. This metaphorical system encodes a communal political philosophy that is neither Western liberal–individualist nor Soviet collectivist but specifically Central Asian and urban–sedentary in its cultural roots. The mahalla linguocultureme is formally untranslatable: its English rendering loses the connotations of solidarity, mutual aid (*hashar*), elder authority (*oqsoqol*), and neighborhood governance that the term carries for Uzbek audiences.

### **The historical and ancestral metaphor (The Silk Road / Amir Temur’s diplomatic Precedent / Star map)**

Across all three speeches, the Silk Road metaphor – sometimes explicit, more

often implied through its component culturemes of roads, bridges, crossroads, and East–West connectivity – functions as the overarching geopolitical frame. The Silk Road linguocultureme simultaneously performs three discourse functions: domestically, it inspires national pride and justifies infrastructure investment as heritage restoration; regionally, it provides a shared civilizational framework for Central Asian and Turkic integration; and internationally, it naturalizes Uzbekistan’s contemporary foreign policy as the resumption of a timeless historical role.

In Uzbek political discourse, Amir Temur is not merely a historical figure but a linguocultureme – a name that condenses a philosophy of centralised statecraft, civilisational pride, and pragmatic diplomacy. When leaders invoke Temur, they position themselves as stewards of a tradition, not as innovators. This ancestral–temporal cultureme blends modern policy language with the value of honouring ancestors: a reform is justified not by its novelty but by its continuity with the past.

The Ulugbek parallel sharpens this logic. Ulugbek’s star map was a work of scientific precision, mapping truths that existed independently of opinion. Contemporary “roadmap” metaphors borrow this prestige: a development plan is presented not as a political choice but as a discovered necessity – authorised by the same authority as a celestial chart. The effect is a quiet replacement of democratic deliberation with ancestral truth.

### **The ecological – renewal metaphor**

The speeches delivered at the UN General Assembly and on ecological themes systematically employ metaphors of water, greenery, and desert to frame national development in ecocultural terms. Expressions such as “*Aral Sea/water crisis*” (*Orol dengizi/suv taqchilligi*), “*green wall*” (*yashil devor*), “*a green zone*” (*yashil hudud*), “*water as life*” (*suv bu hayot*), and “*clean drinking water reached the homes*” (*xonadonlarga toza ichimlik suvi kirib bordi*) encode an ecocultural imaginary specific to the Central Asian arid landscape, where water is literally a matter of survival and green space is genuinely rare. These ecological metaphors carry existential weight unavailable in temperate contexts: when Sh.Mirziyoyev speaks of bringing water to “*715 thousand residents in 188 mahallas*”, the metaphorical resonance of *water-as-life* is not merely figurative but experientially grounded in the environmental realities of Uzbekistan.

### **Metaphorical clusters in Donald Trump’s speeches**

D.Trump’s political discourse provides an exceptionally rich corpus for such analysis. His speeches rely on a recurrent stock of metaphorical imagery drawn from American cultural mythology – war, invasion, disease, economy–as–organism, spatial directionality, and competitive sport – that derives its persuasive power not merely from cognitive mapping but from deep immersion in American cultural narratives, historical memory, and popular ideology. The three speeches under analysis (March 2025 congressional address, September 2025 UN address, December 2025 presidential address) reveal consistent metaphorical clusters that operate as potent linguoculturemes.



Analysis of the three D.Trump speeches yielded eighteen primary metaphorical expressions, which were grouped into five major linguocultureme clusters. The following table presents each cluster with illustrative corpus examples (See Table 2):

Table 2. *Inventory of metaphors analysed*

ID	Metaphor	Category	Speech
M1	Our County was being Invaded	War/Invasion	Speech 3
M2	The Colossal Invasion	War/Invasion	Speech 2
M3	The Migrant Occupation	War/Invasion	Speech 1
M4	Our Country was Dead	Disease/Poison	Speech 3
M5	Poisoning and Destroying our Population	Disease/Poison	Speech 3
M6	The Poison of Critical Race Theory	Disease/Poison	Speech 1
M7	Wages Going up much Faster than Inflation	Competition/Commerce	Speech 1
M8	Our Country's Momentum is Back	Competition/Commerce	Speech 1
M9	We're the Hottest Country	Competition/Commerce	Speech 3
M10	America is back	Spatial Directionality	Speech 1
M11	Bringing our Economy back from the Brink of Ruin	Spatial Directionality	Speech 3
M12	We went from Worst to Best	Spatial Directionality	Speech 3
M13	The Golden Age has only just Begun	Light/Rebirth	Speech 1
M14	The Light to All Nations	Light/Rebirth	Speech 2
M15	Restored American Strength	Light/Rebirth	Speech 1
M16	The Dawn of the Golden Age of America	Light/Rebirth	Speech 1
M17	Our Greatest Era	Light/Rebirth	Speech 1
M18	A Shining Example	Light/Rebirth	Speech 1

### War/Invasion Cluster (IMMIGRATION IS WARFARE)

The most pervasive and ideologically consequential metaphorical cluster in D.Trump's corpus is the systematic framing of immigration as military invasion. Expressions such as "*we have successfully repelled a colossal invasion*" and "*the migrant occupation*" construct immigration as an act of war requiring a military response. The explicit military vocabulary – "*invaded*", "*army*", "*colossal invasion*", "*occupation*" – transforms a complex social phenomenon into an existential military threat, activating culturally specific American responses that bypass rational deliberation. What makes this cluster a linguocultureme is that it pulls on several deep cultural layers at once. The most obvious is post-9/11 homeland security discourse, which blurred the line between immigration enforcement and military response. That discourse trained an audience to hear border-crossing as aggression [Wodak, 2015]. Beneath that lies the older frontier mythology: the settler-colonial story of civilisation against a wild, threatening outside, where constant vigilance against the stranger becomes a patriotic duty.

The phrase "*invaded by an army of 25 million people*" speaks the language of security policy (numbers, quantified threat), frontier myth (physical incursion across a defended line), and providential belief (a people facing existential destruction). This triple activation is what gives the metaphor its emotional grip on its target audience – and what makes it so hard to argue against. To challenge the metaphor is to challenge

all three cultural layers at once.

### **Disease/Poison cluster (POLITICAL OPPONENTS ARE PATHOGENS)**

D.Trump's corpus contains a systematic metaphorical dehumanization of political opponents and immigrants through disease and poison imagery. Expressions such as *"Our country was dead... absolutely dead"*, *"They were poisoning and destroying our population"* and *"We have removed the poison of critical race theory from our public schools"* construct Democratic governance as disease and the speaker as physician–healer. German-British linguist A.Musolff identifies the body politic metaphor as one of the most historically persistent in Western political discourse [Musolff, 2004] but D.Trump's use of this metaphor goes beyond the usual healer–patient frame. The corpus shows a deliberate imbalance: the nation's body is described as sick (*"absolutely dead"*) before he arrives, and recovering only because of him. This pattern – disaster followed by messianic rescue – does something that older body politic rhetoric rarely did so bluntly: it makes Trump himself the cure. The nation does not heal on its own; Trump heals it. Voters are no longer citizens with power: they become patients, helpless without their one leader–healer. Conceptualising the nation as sick evokes strong adverse reactions from the public, more so if the supposedly guilty ones are named [Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018], but the present corpus adds a further dimension: the poison metaphors are not applied uniformly. Drug abuse and critical race theory are cast as poisons introduced by irresponsible others, while immigration is cast as both poison and invasion simultaneously – a double metaphorical loading that positions migrants as both enemy combatants and pathogens, doubly dehumanized. This co-activation of WAR and DISEASE source domains within the same referential frame is a distinctive feature of Trump's 2025 corpus that distinguishes it from earlier analyses of his rhetorical style.

### **Competition/Commerce cluster (POLITICS IS BUSINESS/DEAL-MAKING)**

A distinctively American feature of D.Trump's metaphorical system is the systematic mapping of political relations onto commercial transactions. Expressions such as *"wages going up much faster than inflation"*, *"our country's momentum is back"* and *"We're the Hottest Country"* construct international relations and domestic governance as a competitive marketplace in which the United States must outperform and outmaneuver rivals. This goes beyond the familiar observation that Trump maps politics onto business [Charteris–Black, 2011]. What makes the 2025 corpus analytically significant is how the commercial metaphor reshapes political obligation. Countries are no longer allies bound by shared interests or international rules. They are competitors and customers. America's relationship with them is judged by one question: is the deal good?

The phrase *"We're the Hottest Country"* is especially telling borrows the language of market speculation – a hot stock, a hot commodity – and applies it to national identity. Greatness means being wanted in the global marketplace. This linguocultureme draws on the deep American script of the self-made man and

entrepreneur as the model of political virtue, rooted in Protestant capitalism and frontier commerce. But in the 2025 speeches, the script has shifted. Earlier Trump rhetoric positioned America as the tough negotiator, fighting for fair terms. The 2025 corpus instead positions America as the dominant seller whose products others are lucky to access.

### **Spatial directionality cluster (AMERICA IS A RECOVERABLE TRAJECTORY)**

D.Trump's speeches are characterized by a dense pattern of spatial metaphors encoding directional movement: *"America is back"*, *"bringing our economy back from the brink of ruin"*, *"we went from worst to best"*. The sophisticated rhetorical operation embedded in this cluster is the temporal paradox of making *"back"* mean *"forward"*: recovery of a lost past IS the forward movement. What the 2025 corpus reveals is not a single unified spatial cluster but a network of partially overlapping spatial schemas – backward/forward, high/low, edge/safety – all converging on the same political conclusion: that catastrophe was narrowly averted by the speaker's intervention. This convergence of spatial schemas around a single legitimization argument is what makes the cluster cohere as a linguocultureme rather than as a loose collection of directional expressions.

### **Light/Rebirth cluster (TRUMP IS A MESSIANIC RESTORER)**

A number of expressions across all three speeches construct D.Trump himself as a quasi-messianic figure bringing light after darkness and rebirth after death: *"The Golden Age has only just begun"*, *"the dawn of the Golden Age of America"* *"We founded the light to all nations"* *"I've restored American strength"* and *"this will be our greatest era... forge the freest, most advanced civilization ever to exist"*, *"a shining example"*. These LIGHT/REBIRTH linguoculturemes draw on the Protestant-Enlightenment fusion of biblical providentialist imagery (the light of the covenant, the morning of redemption) and secular Enlightenment progress narrative. What the 2025 corpus adds to existing analyses of this cluster is an important structural refinement. The LIGHT/REBIRTH linguocultureme is not simply messianic self-presentation in general; it operates through a specific theological grammar borrowed from the Protestant jeremiad tradition – the form of communal sermon that diagnoses national decline, names its causes as moral failure, and promises renewal through repentance and right leadership [Wodak, 2015]. The jeremiad structure is visible in the sequential logic of all three Trump speeches: catastrophe is named (*"the country was dead/poisoned/invaded"*), blame is assigned (corrupt institutions, a failed previous administration), and salvation is proclaimed (*"the Golden Age has begun"*, *"strength is restored"*). This three-part movement – fall, diagnosis, redemption – is not a rhetorical accident but a deeply embedded narrative template inherited from American Protestant civic culture. What distinguishes the 2025 deployment is the intensity of the redemption claim: earlier Trump rhetoric described recovery as a process under way; the 2025 corpus frames it as already accomplished (*"I've restored," "has only just begun"* but is irreversibly launched).

## DISCUSSION

### **Convergences in function, divergences in cultural grounding**

A comparative analysis reveals a fundamental structural parallel in discourse functions alongside a radical divergence in cultural grounding. Both leaders utilize metaphorical framing for political legitimation and civilizational assertion (*the rhetorical practice of legitimizing political authority and policy by appealing to a deep, distinct cultural heritage and historical continuity rather than modern political ideology*), validating Chilton's model. Rather than relying on universal cognitive mappings, their choices operate as localized linguoculturemes rooted in distinct civilizational histories. Following Meyer's (2014) distinction between principles-first and applications-first reasoning [Meyer, 2014], Sh.Mirziyoyev's metaphors invoke collective historical narratives, while Trump's prioritize direct problem-solving frames.

Sh.Mirziyoyev's discourses simultaneously weaves multiple cultural strata: Islamic spirituality, Turkic nomadic memory, mahalla solidarity, Soviet-era mobilization, historical dynasties, and the Central Asian landscape. Conversely, Trump's rhetoric synthesizes a tight set of American cultural narratives: Protestant civil religion, frontier/settler mythology, Enlightenment exceptionalism, capitalist individualism, and Jacksonian anti-institutionalism. As Vorobyov argues, linguoculturemes serve as crystallized deposits of cultural experience in language [Vorobyov, 1997]; this contrast reflects two civilizational backgrounds sharing no significant historical common ground.

### **The collectivist vs. Individualist axis**

One of the most theoretically significant contrasts between the two systems concerns the social ontology presupposed by their respective metaphorical frameworks. Mirroring their underlying cultural environments, the metaphorical frameworks manifest a clear ideological divide: Sh.Mirziyoyev's discourse presupposes a collectivist social ontology centered on communal solidarity ("shoulder-to-shoulder", mahalla), whereas Trump's rhetoric drives an individualist narrative focusing on singular political agency ("I took immediate action").

### **Future – construction vs. restoration**

A further significant contrast concerns the temporal orientation of the two metaphorical systems. Sh.Mirziyoyev's dominant temporal metaphor is forward-oriented construction: reform builds a new future on ancient foundations. The mahalla, the Silk Road – these are not objects of nostalgic recovery but sources of legitimating authority for a fundamentally new political project. The expression "*New Uzbekistan*" ("*Yangi O'zbekiston*") crystallizes this temporal orientation: the new is explicitly distinguished from the past while drawing on it for cultural authority.

D.Trump's temporal metaphor is, paradoxically, simultaneously backward and forward: "*America is back*", "*the Golden Age*", all invoke a lost past as the destination of future movement. P.Chilton identifies this temporal paradox as a specific feature of right-populist political discourse: the lost paradise is positioned as both the object of

nostalgia and the goal of political action creating a temporal structure that is neither purely conservative nor purely progressive [Chilton, 2004].

### **Audience adaptation and metaphorical code-switching**

A particularly sophisticated feature of Sh.Mirziyoyev's metaphorical system, revealed by comparison across his three speeches, is the systematic code-switching of metaphorical registers according to the audience. Before domestic audiences, the mahalla-communal and Islamic-spiritual strata dominate; before Islamic audiences, the spiritual-devotional stratum is maximized; before international investors, the commerce-and-construction metaphors dominate. This audience-sensitive metaphor deployment reveals a sophisticated pragmatic awareness of which cultural codes will be most activating for each audience – what Z.Kövecses calls “metaphorical creativity in context” operating at the level of cross-cultural political strategy [Kövecses, 2005].

D.Trump's metaphorical system, by contrast, displays a striking consistency across all three rhetorical contexts – domestic TV address, UN General Assembly, Congressional address. The same clusters (invasion, disease, competition, restoration) appear with similar density regardless of whether the audience is American voters, international diplomats, or Congressional members. This consistency is itself a linguocultural phenomenon: it reveals a stable ideological lexicon that functions as a brand identity for the speaker, and suggests that these metaphors have achieved the status of culturally sanctioned political shorthand within a specific strand of American populist discourse.

### **Dehumanization vs. Dignification: The ethics of political metaphor**

A critical examination of the two leaders' corpora reveals a stark ethical divergence in audience-targeted framing. Sh.Mirziyoyev's metaphors emphasize human dignity, framing citizens as family members, civilization heirs, and co-creators of national development. Even his discourse on poverty mitigation emphasizes collective progress rather than individual failure, reinforcing the Islamic principle of *karama* (human dignity) [Kadivar, 2022]. Conversely, D.Trump's rhetoric systematically relies on dehumanizing scripts, frequently mapping immigration onto military invasions and presenting migrants as an invading “army.” This pattern utilizes negative source domains with zero affirmative representations of migrant experiences, a mechanism that can legitimize exclusionary policies by pushing vulnerable groups outside the state's moral community [Charteris-Black, 2011; Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018].

These opposing ethical outcomes emerge because both leaders strategically adjust their metaphorical choices to resonate with established localized expectations [Zibin & Solopova, 2024]. While D.Trump's base responds to threat-centric, populist anti-establishment and anti-immigrant rhetoric, Sh.Mirziyoyev's audience aligns with communal unity and collaborative partnerships. This asymmetry operates via a fundamental cognitive mechanism: metaphors selectively highlight specific attributes while backgrounding others [Ashurova & Galieva, 2024]. Ultimately, Sh.Mirziyoyev privileges national cohesion and historical continuity, whereas Trump highlights threat and societal rupture – demonstrating how strategic cognitive masking reflects



divergent sociopolitical visions.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows that Sh.Mirziyoyev and D.Trump live in different metaphorical worlds – not because one is right and the other wrong, but because they draw on different cultural encyclopedias. Sh.Mirziyoyev's metaphors grow out of Uzbek collectivism, Islamic heritage, and Silk Road memory. D.Trump's come from American individualism, frontier mythology, and populist distrust of government. Neither set of metaphors is universal; each works because it speaks directly to the cultural memories of its own audience.

From this comparison, four main lessons emerge.

First, political metaphors are always culturally grounded. The two presidents do not use variations of the same universal cognitive patterns. Instead, their metaphors are woven from very specific cultural histories and collective memories. Sh.Mirziyoyev's imagery is layered – communal, dynastic, ecocultural. D.Trump's is tightly interlocked – providentialist, frontier-driven, exceptionalist, capitalist, anti-institutional. These are not just stylistic differences. They reflect fundamentally different ideas about how a country should be governed and what a nation should stand for.

Second, the concept of the linguocultureme is indispensable. Standard cognitive metaphor analysis (mapping one domain onto another) tells you how a metaphor works structurally, but it does not tell you why a particular metaphor resonates with a particular audience. The linguocultureme fills that gap. It gives you a tool to ask: what historical echoes, what value-laden associations, what collective memories make this metaphor land the way it does?

Third, the two metaphorical systems are not symmetrical. Sh.Mirziyoyev switches between cultural registers depending on his audience – Islamic, Turkic, modernist, environmental – which makes his rhetoric legible to very different listeners. D.Trump's system is remarkably consistent across audiences. That makes it powerful for his core American supporters, but harder for outsiders to decode. This asymmetry matters: it affects how each leader's message travels internationally and who can truly hear what they are saying.

Fourth, metaphor choices carry ethical weight. Charteris-Black has argued that critical metaphor analysis is not a neutral academic exercise, and this study bears that out. Sh.Mirziyoyev's metaphors tend to dignify people – citizens are family members, partners in building the nation. D.Trump's metaphors often dehumanise – immigrants become an invading army; opponents become poison. Both sets of metaphors legitimise political authority, but they do so with very different consequences for how groups are seen and treated.

Looking ahead, future research could extend this comparative work to other leaders outside Western contexts, study how real audiences actually interpret these metaphors, and develop quantitative methods for identifying linguoculturemes at scale. For now, this study has shown that bringing together anglophone critical metaphor analysis and post-Soviet linguoculturology creates a richer, more human-

sized framework than either tradition could offer alone. That is the real contribution: a way to compare political discourse across civilisational traditions without flattening what makes each one distinct.

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