

EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONS OF UZBEK POLITICAL METAPHORS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

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Abstract: This thesis is dedicated to analyzing the emotional functions of Uzbek political metaphors from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. The study theoretically elucidates how metaphor evokes feelings of fear, hope, anger, unity, and pride in the audience through psychological processes such as conceptual transfer mechanisms, limbic activation, and somatic markers. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of the emotional impact of national-cultural metaphors inherent in Uzbek political speech are analyzed.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, emotional functions, political metaphor, conceptual transfer, Uzbek language.

In cognitive linguistics, metaphor is interpreted not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but as a fundamental mechanism of thought and perception. In political discourse, metaphor serves to express abstract political concepts through concrete, perceptible, and memorable images. One of the most important features of metaphor is its emotional function – its ability to evoke and intensify specific emotions in the audience. This characteristic is actively utilized by political leaders and their speechwriters.

Uzbek political discourse is a particularly noteworthy object of study in this regard. The figurativeness of the Uzbek language, its richness in proverbs and sayings, and the strong traditions of folklore make the emotional function of political metaphors especially effective. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev skillfully employs this feature in his speeches, with the result that complex political concepts are presented in a form that ordinary people can understand and feel.

The mechanism by which emotional metaphor influences the audience occurs in three stages. This mechanism is described based on research in cognitive linguistics, neuropsychology, and psycholinguistics.

The first stage is conceptual transfer. In this stage, the figurative elements within the source domain of the metaphor are transferred to the target domain. The emotional charge of the source domain is also transferred during this process. For example, the source domain of "travel" is typically associated with positive emotions – anticipation, aspiration, enjoyment, discovery. Consequently, the target domain of "progress" is also perceived positively. An expression like "We are on the path to progress" evokes in the listener feelings of embarking on a journey, discovering new places, and adventure. Conversely, the source domain of "tumor" is associated with fear, hatred, and disgust. Therefore, the metaphor "corruption is a tumor" evokes similarly negative emotions. The conceptual transfer process occurs unconsciously rather than consciously. When a listener hears a metaphor, they

first perceive its emotional content, then proceed to logical analysis. This is why the persuasive power of metaphor is so high.

The second stage is emotional activation. As a result of conceptual transfer, the limbic system of the brain is activated. Neuropsychological research shows that the brain exhibits a stronger emotional reaction to metaphorical expressions compared to literal expressions. When a metaphor is processed, areas of the brain such as the amygdala (fear and threat signal), prefrontal cortex (analyzing the feeling), and insular cortex (sense of disgust) become activated. The somatic marker mechanism (Damasio) is triggered – physical changes in the body occur corresponding to the emotional content of the metaphor. When hearing "a heavy day," one might feel pressure on the shoulders; with "with a light heart," a lightness in the chest; and with "the tumor of corruption," a feeling of disgust and nausea. These physical sensations are recorded subliminally and influence subsequent thought processes. A person may not understand why they feel a certain way, but these feelings influence their decisions.

The third stage is pragmatic orientation. After emotional activation, the feelings evoked by the metaphor are directed toward a specific pragmatic goal. These goals can vary: urging collective action, preparing the audience to accept a particular political decision, supporting the government, delegitimizing an opponent, and so on. Pragmatic orientation is often achieved through modal words ("must," "should," "task," "duty"), pronouns ("we," "all of us," "together"), and imperative constructions ("let's do," "let's achieve," "let's fight"). When the phrase "Let's fight corruption together!" is used, fear and hatred are first evoked (through the tumor metaphor), and then these emotions are directed toward struggle and action ("let's fight" – imperative). This mechanism is highly effective because it not only evokes emotion but also indicates where that emotion should be directed.

National-cultural metaphors specific to Uzbek political speech have a particularly strong emotional impact. Concepts such as "Mahalla" (neighborhood community), "Dasturxon" (tablecloth spread for a meal), "Caravan," "Bobo" (Grandfather), and "Oq yo'l" (white/clear path) are closely intertwined with the historical experience, cultural values, and family traditions of the Uzbek people. Therefore, metaphorical expressions built on them evoke a stronger emotional resonance in the audience compared to universal metaphors.

The concept of Mahalla – holds a central place in Uzbek society. Mahalla is not just a place of residence, but also neighborly relations, mutual help, respect for elders, traditional governance, and a place of upbringing. The metaphor "Mahalla is the foundation of society" encompasses all these meanings. Hearing this metaphor, the listener recalls their own mahalla, neighbors, childhood memories, and their parents' upbringing. This is a very powerful emotional experience.

The concept of Dasturxon – is a symbol of hospitality, unity, sincerity, and sustenance. The metaphor "We are all gathered around one dasturxon" is used in political speech to express unity and solidarity. Hearing this metaphor, the listener recalls their own family's dasturxon, holidays, guests, and warm conversations. These emotions increase readiness to receive the political message.

The concept of Caravan – is a symbol of history, adventure, patience, and unity. The metaphor "Uzbekistan is a caravan on the Great Silk Road" connects the country with historical traditions and portrays it as an active participant in modern global processes.

The concept of Bobo (Grandfather) – is a symbol of respect, wisdom, experience, and kindness. Addressing the President as "Bobo" is widespread in informal contexts, expressing trust and a warm relationship between the leader and the people.

The emotional functions of Uzbek political metaphors are realized based on a complex psycholinguistic mechanism consisting of the stages of cognitive transfer, limbic activation, and pragmatic orientation. This mechanism explains the power of metaphor to influence an audience. In Uzbek political speech, metaphor models such as "path," "home," "spring," "health," and "struggle" perform various emotional functions. National-cultural metaphors – "Mahalla," "Dasturxon," "Caravan," "Bobo" – possess a distinct emotional impact, and their use increases the effectiveness of political speech. Future research is recommended to experimentally study the neurophysiological bases of these mechanisms.

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