

**METAPHOR IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP AND SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV’S  
RHETORICAL STRATEGIES**

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**Abstract** Metaphors play a crucial role in political discourse by shaping public perception, simplifying complex issues, and reinforcing ideological stances. This study examines Donald Trump’s and Shavkat Miramanovich Mirziyoyev’s extensive use of metaphors in their speeches, highlighting their strategic function in persuasion and leadership construction. By analyzing selected speeches, including Trump’s inaugural address and Mirziyoyev’s key policy speeches, this thesis explores the key metaphorical frameworks both leaders employ. The findings suggest that while both use conflict, journey, and building metaphors, their rhetorical styles diverge in their cultural and political contexts, influencing public communication and reception.

**Introduction** Political discourse is a powerful tool for shaping public opinion, and metaphors serve as a critical mechanism within this domain. Metaphors are not merely rhetorical flourishes; they construct reality, frame policies, and evoke emotional responses. While Donald Trump’s political rhetoric is heavily laden with aggressive and populist metaphors, Shavkat Mirziyoyev employs a more reformist and developmental approach. This thesis investigates the primary metaphorical themes present in both leaders’ speeches and their impact on political discourse.

**Literature Review** The study of metaphors in political discourse has gained significant traction among linguists and political analysts. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are fundamental to human thought processes, shaping not only language but also perception and decision-making. Research suggests that Trump’s metaphor usage reinforces his populist narrative, while Mirziyoyev’s metaphors focus

on national progress and economic reform (ResearchGate, 2019; Uzbek Academy of Sciences, 2021). Furthermore, scholarly analyses indicate that both leaders use metaphorical framing to establish political legitimacy and public engagement.

**Methodology** This study employs qualitative content analysis to examine metaphorical language in key speeches by both leaders, including:

- Trump’s 2017 Inaugural Address
- Trump’s 2020 State of the Union Address
- Mirziyoyev’s 2016 Inaugural Speech
- Mirziyoyev’s 2022 Address to the Nation

These speeches were analyzed for recurring metaphorical themes and their rhetorical impact, supported by linguistic frameworks from cognitive metaphor theory and discourse analysis.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

#### **1. Conflict Metaphors**

- Trump: Frequently employs war and battle metaphors, portraying political and social issues as conflicts (e.g., “war on drugs,” “invasion of illegal immigrants”).
- Mirziyoyev: Uses a more constructive conflict metaphor, framing reforms as a “battle against corruption” and an “economic struggle.”

#### **2. Journey Metaphors**

- Trump: Describes America’s progress as a journey (e.g., “steering the country in the right direction”).
- Mirziyoyev: Uses similar journey imagery but with a collective vision (e.g., “Our nation’s path to renewal and modernization”).

#### **3. Building Metaphors**

- Trump: Often refers to “rebuilding America” and creating a “strong foundation.”
- Mirziyoyev: Frequently emphasizes national development (e.g., “constructing a prosperous future,” “laying the groundwork for economic success”).

#### **4. Economic Growth Metaphors**

- Trump: Uses plant-based metaphors (e.g., “planting the seeds of economic growth”).
- Mirziyoyev: Similar usage but with agricultural imagery relevant to Uzbekistan’s economy (e.g., “harvesting the fruits of reform”).

#### **5. Orientational Metaphors**

- Trump: Uses spatial metaphors like “soaring economy” or “falling opponents.”
- Mirziyoyev: Emphasizes “rising opportunities” and “elevating standards of living.”

**6. Security and Stability Metaphors**

- Trump: Frames national security with fortress metaphors (e.g., “building strong borders,” “defending American sovereignty”).
- Mirziyoyev: Uses metaphors emphasizing unity and social cohesion (e.g., “strengthening the pillars of society,” “fortifying trust between government and people”).

**7. Health and Well-being Metaphors**

- Trump: Relates economic recovery to health metaphors (e.g., “reviving the economy,” “America is stronger than ever before”).
- Mirziyoyev: Uses similar health metaphors but often with a focus on education and reforms (e.g., “curing corruption,” “injecting new energy into reforms”).

**8. Sports and Competition Metaphors**

- Trump: Uses competition-driven metaphors to highlight economic policies (e.g., “winning again,” “beating China in trade”).
- Mirziyoyev: Less confrontational but still employs sports metaphors in economic and social contexts (e.g., “raising the bar for education,” “pushing forward reforms like a strong team”).

**9. Religious and Moral Metaphors**

- Trump: Occasionally employs religious imagery to connect with conservative voters (e.g., “America is a nation under God,” “restoring faith in our institutions”).
- Mirziyoyev: Uses moral and ethical metaphors (e.g., “building a just society,” “ensuring a bright future for our children”).

For further analysis, the metaphors in President Donald Trump's second inaugural address were delivered on January 20, 2025. Trump employed several metaphors in this speech to convey his vision and critique past leadership. For example, the usage of the "Golden Age" metaphor: "Three days ago, I took the oath of office, and we began the golden age of America." Thus, can be referred to that the commencement of his term as the onset of a "golden age" invokes a metaphor of prosperity and excellence. Historically, a "golden age" denotes a period of great achievements and happiness. By

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using this metaphor, Trump suggests that his leadership will usher in an era of unparalleled success for the nation. "Weaponized" is another example of a metaphor in his speech. Describing the Justice Department as "weaponized" implies that it has been transformed into a tool or weapon against him. This metaphor suggests that the agency, which should be impartial, is being used aggressively by his adversaries to target him, highlighting a perceived misuse of power.

Excerpt: "He decried the attempts of the Justice Department under Merrick Garland to prosecute him over the events of January 6, 2021, arguing that his political enemies had weaponized the agency."

In further works on this topic, the usage of the following metaphors can be enlightened as a bright example "Peacemaker", "Tested and Challenged", "Manifest Destiny"

Excerpt: "He asserted that he wanted to be known as a peacemaker and that the strength of a nation should be measured by how many wars it puts an end to or prevents altogether rather than by those it wins."

Analysis: Labelling himself a "peacemaker" positions Trump as a figure who fosters peace rather than conflict. This metaphor serves to craft an image of a leader dedicated to resolving disputes and maintaining harmony, contrasting with a warrior-like persona.

"Tested and Challenged" Metaphor

Excerpt: "He described himself as chosen by God, and that he was 'tested and challenged more than any president in our 250-year history.'"

Analysis: The phrase "tested and challenged" employs a metaphor of examination or trial, suggesting that Trump's experiences have been a series of rigorous assessments. This positions him as a resilient figure who has endured and overcome significant adversities.

"Manifest Destiny" Metaphor

Excerpt: "Trump invoked the phrase 'Manifest Destiny' as he described an expansionist agenda."

Analysis: "Manifest Destiny" is a historical concept that justified American territorial expansion in the 19th century. By invoking this metaphor, Trump aligns his policies with a sense of destined growth and progress, suggesting that expanding influence or territory is a natural and preordained course for the nation.

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In summary, President Trump's use of metaphors in his inaugural address serves to frame his administration as the beginning of a prosperous era, portray himself as a divinely chosen and resilient leader, and align his policies with historical narratives of American progress and peace.

**Conclusion** Both Donald Trump and Shavkat Mirziyoyev utilize metaphors strategically to enhance their persuasive appeal and leadership persona. However, while Trump's rhetoric is often confrontational and populist, Mirziyoyev's discourse leans towards reformist and developmental themes. By framing political issues through familiar metaphorical structures, both leaders effectively shape public perception and reinforce their ideological narratives. The addition of security, health, sports, and moral metaphors further solidifies their rhetorical styles, catering to their respective audiences. Future research could further explore cross-cultural comparisons in political metaphor usage.

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