

**A COGNITIVE-PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO POLITICAL PHRASEOLOGY IN
AMERICAN AND BRITISH MEDIA**

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Annotation: The cognitive and pragmatic aspects of political phraseology in American and British media discourse are investigated in this study. Political pieces from CNN, The Guardian, and the BBC served as the basis for the study. The study examines the role phraseological units play in cognitive framing and political persuasion using Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Cognitive Phraseology, and Critical Discourse Analysis. The results show that conceptual metaphors like POLITICS IS JOURNEY and POLITICS IS GAME play a major role in structuring political phraseology. Important pragmatic tasks like appraisal, persuasion, legitimisation, and ideological framing are carried out by these statements. According to the comparison investigation, American and British media have different communication tactics but similar cognitive tendencies. The study emphasises the usefulness of phraseological units in influencing how the general public perceives political reality.

Key words: Phraseology, media discourse, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, political discourse, and conceptual metaphor.

Introduction

Political media discourse influences public views of political events and actors by framing reality with certain linguistic choices. Media organisations deliberately create meanings that affect how viewers understand political happenings rather than just reporting facts. Political phraseology, which comprises idiomatic idioms, metaphorical collocations, and set word combinations, is one of the most important language tools in this process. These phrases both direct audience interpretation and aid in the simplification of difficult political matters. Phraseological units become effective tools for structuring political information and forming a shared view of current events in a more approachable and cognitively familiar shape through frequent use in media texts.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that human cognition is mostly metaphorical, enabling the understanding of abstract political issues through familiar realms like travel or battle. Expressions like “political battle,” “fight for power,” and “roadmap to reform” reflect this. According to academics like Schäffner (2004), Charteris-Black (2011), van Dijk (1998), and Alefirenko (2010), political language serves persuasive, ideological, and cognitive purposes that influence how events are interpreted and assessed. There are still few comparative studies of phraseological usage in American and British media, despite substantial research in political speech. Thus, this study examines the pragmatic and cognitive roles of political phraseology in CNN, The Guardian, and the BBC.

Literature Review

The cognitive approach to phraseology is based on the idea that underlying mental structures are reflected in language. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory of Lakoff and Johnson describes how metaphorical mappings from more concrete domains are used to systematically understand abstract political realities. Metaphors like WAR, JOURNEY, GAME, and FAMILY, which are realised through repetitive phraseological expressions, often organise meaning-making processes

in political discourse. By offering recognisable cognitive frameworks for comprehending abstract political events, these conceptual models not only simplify complicated political occurrences but also direct public interpretation.

Building on this viewpoint, Alefirenko highlights that phraseological units encode communal conceptualisations moulded by social experience and culturally shared knowledge. In a similar vein, Kubryakova emphasises how language serves as a cognitive process for classifying, organising, and interpreting human experience. When taken as a whole, these methods clarify that political phraseology's cognitive underpinnings are not just linguistic conventions but rather a reflection of culturally established ways of thinking.

Schäffner contends that phraseological expressions support political framing, assessment, and persuasion in media discourse from a pragmatic and discourse-analytic standpoint. Charteris-Black goes on to show how phraseological and metaphorical language may be an effective persuasive tool for influencing the attitudes and feelings of an audience. Van Dijk highlights the ideological aspect of this type of language in Critical Discourse Analysis, demonstrating how discourse perpetuates social power dynamics. Furthermore, recurrent metaphorical patterns create stable cognitive frames that shape the public's perception of political reality, as explained by Musolff's theory of metaphor scenarios.

Methodology

In order to provide a thorough cognitive-pragmatic analysis of political phraseology in media speech, this study uses a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. By combining these techniques, it is possible to identify recurrent linguistic patterns and provide a thorough analysis of their pragmatic and cognitive roles. The study focuses on political stories from CNN, The Guardian, and the BBC, which are well-known for being significant sources of political discourse in both American and British media.

The corpus includes 150 political articles written between 2024 and 2025. Texts representing important political issues, such as elections, foreign conflicts, economic policies, and governmental decision-making, were chosen using a purposive sample technique. CNN was picked to represent American media, while The Guardian and the BBC were chosen to represent British media. Phraseological units, which include idiomatic idioms, metaphorical collocations, and fixed or semi-fixed word combinations used in political situations, were manually extracted as part of the data gathering process. To guarantee semantic and pragmatic accuracy, every extracted unit was examined in its immediate context.

The analysis was undertaken in three steps. Initially, phraseological units were recognised and categorised based on their semantic and structural characteristics. Second, using Conceptual Metaphor Theory, a cognitive analysis was used to identify the underlying conceptual metaphors, specifically POLITICS IS WAR, POLITICS IS JOURNEY, POLITICS IS GAME, and POLITICS IS FAMILY. Third, a pragmatic study looked at these units' communicative roles, such as ideological positioning, persuasion, appraisal, legitimisation, and emotional framing. Lastly, the frequency, usage patterns, and pragmatic orientation of British and American media discourse were compared and contrasted using a comparative method.

Results and Discussion

The study demonstrates that political phraseology in both British and American media is mostly based on the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS WAR. Frequently used phrases like "political battle," "fight for power," "campaign attack," and "political offensive" serve to illustrate this image. These phraseological units highlight rivalry, opposition, and struggle while portraying political processes as conflict-driven endeavours. Furthermore, the metaphors POLITICS IS JOURNEY and POLITICS IS GAME are also frequently used, as seen by phrases like "roadmap to reform," "political path," and "political player," which conceptualise politics as strategic engagement or movement toward goals.

**Distribution of Conceptual Metaphors in British and American Media
(BBC, The Guardian, CNN)**

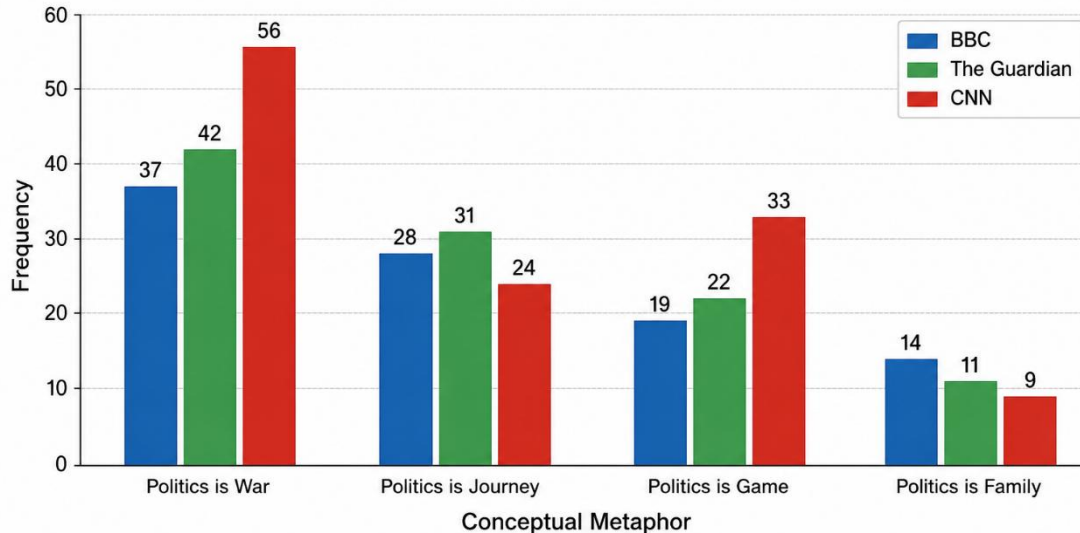


Figure 2. Distribution of conceptual metaphors in British (BBC, The Guardian) and American (CNN) media discourse based on corpus analysis (2024–2025).

From a practical standpoint, the results demonstrate that political phraseological units mostly serve persuasive and evaluative purposes, with ideological framing and legitimisation coming in second. These purposes show that phraseology is more than just ornamental; rather, it is a tactical instrument for influencing audience perception and directing mental and emotional reactions to political developments. Schäffner and Charteris-Black’s assertions on the rhetorical efficacy of metaphorical language in political communication are supported by the predominance of persuasive and evaluative usage.

The comparative research also reveals significant distinctions as well as commonalities between American and British media discourse. CNN has a greater inclination for conflict-oriented and aggressive phraseological patterns, especially those connected to the WAR metaphor, even if the BBC, The Guardian, and CNN all use similar conceptual metaphors. The BBC and The Guardian, on the other hand, use JOURNEY and GAME metaphors more frequently, indicating a somewhat more interpretive and analytical framing style. These variations imply that different journalistic traditions and ideological stances within American and British media environments influence political phraseology in addition to universal cognitive mechanisms.

Conclusion

The study found that political phraseology is an important cognitive and pragmatic resource in current media discourse. By using well-known conceptual analogies to help audiences understand complex political realities, phraseological units simplify interpretation while also influencing assessment and judgement. The analysis reveals that POLITICS IS WAR, POLITICS IS JOURNEY, and POLITICS IS GAME are the most common conceptual metaphors used by the BBC, The Guardian, and CNN to frame and comprehend political events.

The results confirm that political phraseological expressions serve important pragmatic purposes such as persuasion, appraisal, and ideological framing. While the intellectual underpinnings of American and British media are similar, there are differences in the pragmatic realisation and intensity of metaphorical language, with CNN favouring more conflict-oriented



framing. Overall, the study emphasises how closely language, cognition, and ideology interact to shape political meaning in media discourse.

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