

## Phraseology in German and Uzbek Political-Media Discourse: Structural-Semantic, Conceptual and Pragmatic Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the structural-semantic, conceptual, and pragmatic characteristics of phraseological expressions in German and Uzbek political media discourse. The analysis is based on a balanced sample of 1,200 units (600 German and 600 Uzbek) and combines phraseological classification with conceptual and discourse-pragmatic analysis. The findings show that phraseological status in both languages is best understood as a continuum of idiomaticity and conventionalization. Seven major pragmatic functions are identified: evaluation, persuasion, framing, emotionalization, legitimization, dramatization, and solidarization. The analysis also reveals recurrent conceptual domains, particularly movement/progress, foundation/construction, connection, position, pressure, conflict, support, and visibility. Despite differences in lexical structure and figurative realization, German and Uzbek phraseological expressions frequently converge at conceptual and pragmatic-functional levels. The study therefore distinguishes three levels of cross-linguistic correspondence: formal equivalence, conceptual correspondence, and pragmatic-functional correspondence, demonstrating that contrastive phraseological analysis should extend beyond direct one-to-one equivalence.*

**Keywords:** Phraseology, political media discourse, German, Uzbek, conceptual framing

## INTRODUCTION

Political media discourse requires complex political processes to be presented in a condensed, accessible, and evaluatively meaningful form. Phraseological expressions are particularly suited to this task because their conventionalized structures combine semantic compression with evaluative and pragmatic potential. They may therefore contribute not only to the description of political events but also to their interpretation and framing.

Phraseological expressions are conventionally reproduced multiword units characterized by varying degrees of structural stability and semantic idiomaticity. In Uzbek phraseological scholarship, Rahmatullayev's lexicographic work represents an important contribution to the description and systematization of Uzbek phraseological units. Following Burger's classification, the analysis distinguishes referential phraseological expressions (RF), structural phraseologisms (SF), and communicative phraseologisms (KF). Transitional categories are additionally used in the present study to account for borderline cases.

Phraseological expressions may also structure abstract political phenomena through more concrete domains of experience. Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains such mappings between conceptual domains, while research on political metaphor demonstrates their role in the interpretation and framing of political processes. Accordingly, phraseological form and conceptual framing are treated as related but distinct analytical levels.

The pragmatic effect of phraseology is likewise context-dependent. In political-media discourse, phraseological expressions may contribute to evaluation, persuasion, framing, emotionalization, legitimization, dramatization, and solidarization. These functions can overlap; consequently, the present study distinguishes the dominant contextual function from possible secondary effects.

From a contrastive perspective, German and Uzbek may represent comparable political phenomena through different lexical structures and figurative images. Direct formal

equivalence therefore constitutes only one possible type of relationship. The present study distinguishes three levels of cross-linguistic correspondence: formal equivalence, conceptual correspondence, and pragmatic-functional correspondence. This distinction makes it possible to compare phraseological expressions without reducing cross-linguistic correspondence to one-to-one lexical matching.

Against this background, the study examines a balanced analytical sample of 1,200 phraseological units (600 German and 600 Uzbek) and addresses four questions: 1) What structural-semantic characteristics are displayed by phraseological expressions in the two datasets? 2) Which pragmatic functions do they perform in political-media contexts? 3) Which conceptual domains recur in the representation of political processes? 4) At which formal, conceptual, and pragmatic-functional levels do German and Uzbek political-media phraseologies converge or diverge?

The analysis integrates these dimensions in the following sequence:

phraseological form → semantic structure → conceptual framing  
→ pragmatic function → discursive effect

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on a balanced analytical sample of 1,200 phraseological units (600 German and 600 Uzbek) collected from political-media texts published in German and Uzbek news and institutional media. The dataset was constructed as an analytical sample rather than a frequency corpus; consequently, the equal number of units does not imply equal phraseological frequency in the two languages. Repeated occurrences of the same expression were treated as contextual attestations rather than separate phraseological types, while variant forms representing the same underlying phraseological model were consolidated. This preserves the methodological distinction already established in the current manuscript.

The units were classified primarily according to Burger's phraseological framework. Three major categories were distinguished: referential phraseological expressions (RF), structural phraseologisms (SF), and communicative phraseologisms (KF). Referential expressions were further differentiated according to their degree of idiomaticity and conventionalization. The coding system comprised RF-I (fully idiomatic), RF-TI (partially idiomatic), RF-K (collocational/conventionalized), SF (structural), and KF (communicative). Transitional cases were coded as RF-I/TI, RF-TI/K, RF-K/TI, and SF/KF, reflecting gradual boundaries between categories rather than forcing borderline units into rigid classes.

Each unit was analysed at four interconnected levels: 1) structural-semantic classification, 2) conceptual framing, 3) pragmatic function, and 4) cross-linguistic correspondence. Conceptual analysis was informed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory and discourse-oriented approaches to political metaphor. It focused on recurrent domains such as movement/progress foundation/construction, connection, position, pressure, conflict, support, and visibility.

Pragmatic analysis distinguished seven context-dependent functions: evaluation, persuasion, framing, emotionalization, legitimization, dramatization, and solidarization. Where several functions co-occurred, the dominant contextual function was used for classification.

German and Uzbek expressions were finally compared at three levels: formal equivalence, conceptual correspondence, and pragmatic-functional correspondence. Conceptual similarity was not treated automatically as translation equivalence.

Quantitative structural distribution is reported for the German N=600 dataset. The Uzbek N=600 dataset is used primarily for qualitative structural-semantic, conceptual, and pragmatic comparison, particularly because mixed and borderline phraseological categories do not always permit unambiguous assignment to a single structural class. Accordingly, the study does not attempt a direct frequency comparison between German and Uzbek political media; such a comparison would require

comparable source corpora, total token counts, and normalized frequencies.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals both shared tendencies and language-specific patterns in German and Uzbek political-media phraseology. In the German sample, 425 of 600 units (70.8%) are classified as RF-I/TI, followed by 70 RF-TI units (11.7%) and 26 RF-I units (4.3%); the remaining expressions belong to RF-TI/K, RF-K, SF, KF, and mixed categories. The predominance of referential expressions situated between full and partial idiomaticity supports a continuum-based interpretation of phraseological status rather than a strict division between idiomatic and non-idiomatic units. As Table 1 shows, transitional referential phraseologisms clearly dominate the German sample, supporting a continuum-based rather than categorical interpretation of phraseological status. This distribution supports a continuum-based interpretation of phraseological status rather than a strict division between idiomatic and non-idiomatic units.

Table 1. *Structural-semantic distribution of German phraseological units (N = 600)*

| Category          | Description                                                     | N   | %     |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| RF-I/TI           | Referential, transitional between fully and partially idiomatic | 425 | 70.8  |
| RF-TI             | Referential, partially idiomatic                                | 70  | 11.7  |
| RF-I              | Referential, fully idiomatic                                    | 26  | 4.3   |
| Other categories* | RF-TI/K, RF-K, SF, KF, and mixed categories                     | 79  | 13.2  |
| Total             |                                                                 | 600 | 100.0 |

**Note:** "Other categories" is an aggregate reporting category and does not constitute a separate phraseological class.

The Uzbek material likewise contains numerous partially idiomatic and conventionalized expressions. Recurrent examples include *zamin yaratmoq* "to create a foundation," *yo'l ochmoq* "to open the way," *qadam qo'yimoq* "to take a step," *o'z aksini topmoq* "to find its reflection," and *yangi bosqichga olib chiqmoq* "to bring to a new stage." Particularly productive are

phraseological families organized around *yo'l* “way,” *qadam* “step,” *bosqich* “stage,” *zamin/poydevor* “foundation,” and *ko'prik* “bridge.” These patterns indicate that conventionalization in Uzbek political-media discourse operates not only through individual expressions but also through recurrent phraseological models.

Pragmatically, the data reveal seven recurrent functions: evaluation, persuasion, framing, emotionalization, legitimization, dramatization, and solidarization. These functions are context-dependent and may overlap within a single occurrence. German *die Weichen stellen*, for example, frames political decision-making as determining a future direction and may simultaneously contribute to evaluation or legitimization. Uzbek *zamin yaratmoq* similarly presents favourable conditions as a foundation for subsequent development. German *unter Druck stehen* may contribute to dramatization by construing political constraints as physical pressure, whereas Uzbek expressions involving *ko'prik* or *rishta* may support solidarization by representing social or interstate relations as connections. These observations support a contextual view of political discourse in which evaluative and persuasive effects emerge through the interaction between linguistic choices and their discourse environment.

Table 2. *Pragmatic functions of phraseological expressions in German and Uzbek political-media discourse*

| Pragmatic function | German example                   | Uzbek example                      | Dominant discourse effect                                        |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Evaluation         | <i>auf den Prüfstand stellen</i> | <i>tanqidiy ko'z bilan qaramoq</i> | Evaluates or critically assesses political actions and decisions |
| Persuasion         | <i>an einem Strang ziehen</i>    | <i>bir yoqadan bosh chiqarmoq</i>  | Encourages collective action and common purpose                  |
| Framing            | <i>die Weichen stellen</i>       | <i>yo'l ochmoq</i>                 | Frames political development through direction and movement      |
| Emotionalization   | <i>Öl ins Feuer gießen</i>       | <i>o'tga yog' quymoq</i>           | Intensifies the representation of conflict or tension            |
| Legitimization     | <i>den Grundstein legen</i>      | <i>zamin yaratmoq</i>              | Presents political action as a foundation for future development |

|                |                           |                            |                                                              |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dramatization  | <i>unter Druck stehen</i> | <i>bosim ostida qolmoq</i> | Represents political constraints as pressure or threat       |
| Solidarization | <i>Brücken bauen</i>      | <i>ko'prik qurmoq</i>      | Constructs cooperation, rapprochement, and social connection |

**Note;** The German and Uzbek expressions illustrate the same dominant pragmatic function and should not in all cases be interpreted as direct phraseological equivalents.

As Table 2 demonstrates, pragmatic functions are not inherent in individual phraseological expressions but emerge through contextual activation. The same expression may combine evaluative, persuasive, or framing effects, although one function typically becomes dominant in a particular political-media context.

At the conceptual level, recurrent domains include movement/progress, foundation/construction, connection, position, pressure, conflict, support, and visibility. The MOVEMENT/PROGRESS domain is represented by German *die Weichen stellen* and Uzbek *qadam qo'ymoq*, *yo'l ochmoq*, and *yangi bosqichga olib chiqmoq*. Although these expressions differ lexically and figuratively, they conceptualize political development through direction, movement, or progression. FOUNDATION/CONSTRUCTION is particularly visible in Uzbek *zamin yaratmoq* and *mustahkam poydevor yaratmoq*, while German *unter Druck stehen* illustrates PRESSURE and *auf den Prüfstand stellen* conceptualizes political evaluation through a testing scenario.

The contrastive analysis consequently shows that formal divergence does not exclude conceptual convergence. German *die Weichen stellen* and Uzbek *yangi bosqichga olib chiqmoq*, for instance, are not direct phraseological equivalents: the former is based on railway imagery, whereas the latter represents development as movement between stages. Nevertheless, both participate in a broader movement/direction/progress configuration and may perform comparable framing or legitimizing functions. Cross-linguistic correspondence is therefore more adequately described at three levels: formal equivalence, conceptual correspondence, and pragmatic-

functional correspondence. The contrastive analysis revealed different types of correspondence between German and Uzbek phraseological expressions. As Table 3 shows, formal similarity represents only one possible relationship, while structurally different expressions may converge at conceptual and pragmatic-functional levels.

Table 3. *Levels of cross-linguistic correspondence in German and Uzbek political-media phraseology*

| German expression                | Uzbek expression                    | Conceptual domain          | Dominant level of correspondence | Main observation                                                            |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Öl ins Feuer gießen</i>       | <i>o'tga yog' quymoq</i>            | Conflict / intensification | Formal–conceptual–functional     | Closely corresponding lexical imagery and discourse function                |
| <i>Brücken bauen</i>             | <i>ko'prik qurmoq</i>               | Connection / cooperation   | Formal-conceptual-functional     | Shared bridge metaphor for cooperation and rapprochement                    |
| <i>den Grundstein legen</i>      | <i>zamin yaratmoq</i>               | Foundation / construction  | Conceptual-functional            | Different lexical realization of a shared foundation model                  |
| <i>die Weichen stellen</i>       | <i>yo'l ochmoq</i>                  | Movement / direction       | Conceptual-functional            | Different imagery, but shared orientation toward future development         |
| <i>die Weichen stellen</i>       | <i>yangi bosqichga olib chiqmoq</i> | Movement / progress        | Conceptual-functional            | Different figurative models converge in representing political progress     |
| <i>unter Druck stehen</i>        | <i>bosim ostida qolmoq</i>          | Pressure                   | Formal-conceptual-functional     | Closely corresponding pressure metaphor and pragmatic effect                |
| <i>auf den Prüfstand stellen</i> | <i>qayta ko'rib chiqmoq</i>         | Testing / evaluation       | Pragmatic-functional             | Figurative German expression corresponds mainly through evaluative function |

**Note:** Formal correspondence refers to similarity in lexical and figurative realization; conceptual correspondence refers to shared underlying conceptualization; pragmatic-functional correspondence refers to comparable discourse effects in context. The categories indicate the dominant type of correspondence observed in the analysed examples and do not constitute a numerical equivalence scale.

The strongest cross-linguistic convergence is observable where both languages employ closely related figurative models, as in German *Öl ins Feuer gießen* and Uzbek *o'tga yog' quymoq*. In other cases, such as *die Weichen stellen* and *yangi bosqichga olib chiqmoq*, the lexical imagery differs considerably while the

expressions converge at the conceptual and pragmatic-functional levels. This confirms that cross-linguistic phraseological correspondence cannot be reduced to formal equivalence alone (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen 2005).

Language-specific preferences nevertheless remain visible. German political-media phraseology frequently draws on scenarios of pressure, testing, direction, restriction, and crisis management, as illustrated by *unter Druck stehen*, *auf den Prüfstand stellen*, and *die Reißleine ziehen*. Uzbek shows greater productivity of expressions involving *yo'l*, *qadam*, *bosqich*, *zamin*, *poydevor*, and *ko'prik*, foregrounding movement, construction, and connection. The contrast thus concerns primarily the conventional phraseological realization of political experience rather than the presence or absence of figurative conceptualization.

Taken together, the findings support the following multidimensional relationship:

phraseological form → semantic structure → conceptual framing  
→ pragmatic function → discursive effect

This model moves beyond one-to-one lexical equivalence and accounts for cases in which German and Uzbek expressions differ structurally but converge conceptually or pragmatically. Conceptual correspondence, however, should not be equated automatically with translation equivalence, since interchangeability remains dependent on the specific textual and communicative context.

Two limitations define the scope of these findings. First, the balanced 600+600 dataset is an analytical sample rather than a frequency corpus, so the results do not establish equal phraseological frequency in German and Uzbek political media. Second, quantitative structural distribution is reported only for the German dataset, while the Uzbek material is examined primarily at structural-semantic, conceptual, and pragmatic levels. The findings should therefore be interpreted as a contrastive analysis of phraseological patterns rather than as a normalized cross-linguistic frequency comparison.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined phraseological expressions in German and Uzbek political media discourse using a balanced analytical sample of 1,200 units (600 German and 600 Uzbek). The findings show that phraseological status is best understood as a continuum of idiomaticity and conventionalization and that phraseological expressions function as important resources for conceptualizing, evaluating, and structuring political reality.

The contrastive analysis revealed both language-specific patterns and cross-linguistic similarities. German political-media phraseology frequently draws on scenarios of pressure, direction, testing, and crisis management, whereas the Uzbek material shows productive patterns involving *yo'l*, *qadam*, *bosqich*, *zamin*, *poydevor*, and *ko'prik*. Despite these differences in lexical and figurative realization, the two languages often converge at the level of conceptual framing and pragmatic function.

The study therefore distinguishes three levels of cross-linguistic correspondence: formal equivalence, conceptual correspondence, and pragmatic-functional correspondence. This distinction demonstrates that German–Uzbek phraseological comparison should extend beyond direct one-to-one equivalence and account for conceptual and communicative relationships between structurally different expressions.

The balanced dataset represents an analytical sample rather than a frequency corpus; consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence of relative phraseological frequency in German and Uzbek political media. Future research may extend the present analysis through larger comparable corpora and normalized frequency data.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that German and Uzbek political media may employ different phraseological forms while using them for comparable processes of conceptualization, framing, evaluation, and communicative meaning construction.

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