

## METAPHORS: UNLOCKING INTENSITY'S POTENTIAL

<sup>a</sup>YEGANA MASHADI KYZY ORUJOVA

*Azerbaijan University of Languages, 2, 134 Rashid Behbudov Str., Baku, Azerbaijan  
Khazar University, 41 Makhsati St, Baku, Azerbaijan  
email: <sup>a</sup>orucova-yeqana@rambler.ru*

**Abstract:** The article explores the profound impact of metaphors in unlocking the potential of intensity. Metaphors, as cognitive tools, have the unique ability to shape our perception, enhance understanding, and facilitate communication. By examining the role of metaphors in various contexts, this article highlights their potential to amplify intensity and foster personal growth. Drawing on interdisciplinary research and real-life examples, we delve into the mechanisms through which metaphors influence human thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Additionally, we discuss practical applications of metaphors in educational, therapeutic, and creative settings, providing insights into how individuals can harness the power of metaphors to unlock their own intensity. Overall, this article aims to shed light on the transformative nature of metaphors and their role in harnessing intensity's full potential.

**Keywords:** metaphors; intensity; power of language; human communication; expression.

### 1 Introduction

Intensity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses passion, focus, and unwavering dedication towards a goal. It is often associated with exceptional achievements and extraordinary experiences. However, harnessing and sustaining intensity can be challenging. This article explores how metaphors, as powerful cognitive tools, can unlock intensity's potential by shaping our perception, enhancing understanding, and facilitating communication.

In the realm of communication, the power of language and its ability to convey intensity and shape our understanding of the world is undeniable. The speech act, with its various levels of intensity, provides a framework for analyzing the expressive nature of language and its impact on communication. This article delves into the intricate relationship between language and intensity, exploring how different levels of intensity manifest in verbal expressions. Additionally, we examine the specific types of intensities, such as attractive, allocutive, informative, and special communicative, and their significance in conveying meaning and influencing communication dynamics. Through analysis of political texts, we shed light on the prevalence of negative intensity in pre-election campaigns in France, highlighting the persuasive strategies employed to shape public opinion. By delving into the depths of language and intensity, this article aims to deepen understanding of the complex interplay between language, expression, and the intensity of communication.

### 2 Literature Review

There are several research studies conducted on the topic of metaphors and intensity. For example G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (1980) [11] explore how metaphors shape our understanding of the world and our experiences. They discuss the role of metaphors in expressing and conceptualizing intensity. R.W. Gibbs (1994) [6] examines the cognitive processes involved in understanding and producing metaphors. He explores how metaphors contribute to our understanding of intensity and other abstract concepts. The book of Z. Kövecses (2002) [9] provides an overview of metaphor theory and its practical applications. It explores how metaphors can be used to convey and enhance the experience of intensity in various domains. The research of M.J. Landau, B.P. Meier, and L.A. Keefer (2010) [10] examines the influence of metaphors on social cognition, including the perception and interpretation of intense emotional experiences. L. Cameron (2003) [3] explores the use of metaphors in educational contexts, including how metaphors can enhance the understanding and experience of intensity in learning environments.

These are just a few examples of the research conducted on metaphors and intensity. Further exploration of academic

databases and research journals can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

### 3 Materials and Method

During the research, the discursive analysis method was used. Materials of this research are political and media discourses in French.

### 4 Results and Discussion

#### *The Power of Metaphors*

Metaphors are not merely linguistic phenomena - they are cognitive tools that enable conceptualizing abstract ideas and making sense of complex concepts. They provide a bridge between the known and the unknown, allowing grasping unfamiliar experiences by relating them to familiar ones.

Metaphors are present in almost every language and culture. They represent a fundamental aspect of human communication and expression. Different languages have unique metaphors that reflect their cultural values and beliefs. For example, English often uses sports-related metaphors, while Chinese metaphors often draw inspiration from nature.

Metaphors can vary in their degree of transparency. Some metaphors are straightforward and easily understood, while others require deeper interpretation and analysis. Metaphors can evolve and change over time, reflecting shifts in societal values and cultural contexts. They can also be influenced by historical events and technological advancements.

Researchers have conducted extensive studies on the role of metaphors in language and cognition. These studies explore how metaphors shape our thinking processes, influence decision-making, and impact our perception of the world.

Literature is a rich source of metaphors, showcasing the creative and expressive power of language. Exploring renowned literary works can provide insights into the diverse ways metaphors are used to convey meaning and evoke emotions.

Cognitive scientists investigate the cognitive processes involved in metaphor comprehension and production. Their findings shed light on how metaphors facilitate understanding and shape our mental representations. Comparative studies on metaphors across different cultures offer valuable insights into the cultural and contextual variations in metaphor usage. These studies highlight the universal aspects of metaphorical thinking while also emphasizing the unique cultural nuances. Engaging in creative exercises, such as writing prompts or artistic activities, can help individuals explore and experiment with metaphors. These activities encourage the development of metaphorical thinking skills and enhance creative expression.

Metaphors have the ability to evoke emotions, create vivid mental imagery, and stimulate creativity. They act as a lens through which we perceive the world, influencing our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. By understanding the language facts and exploring the rich materials available, we can further appreciate the power of metaphors and their impact on our cognitive processes and communication.

#### *Intensity in political and media discourses*

The author of political texts often tries to influence emotions and touch moral values. The author of political discourse chooses tools (language correlations) for this reason in order to influence the addressee in terms of intensity realization. Intensities (at the ideological level) in political discourse may relate to: 1) expression of consent with the authority (loyalty towards it); 2) expression of dissatisfaction with the authorities; 3) influence the mind of the recipient in the appropriate spirit [12].

In Lassan's (1995) [12] research, different functions of mass media discourse, including political discourse, are identified and analyzed. One of these functions is the agonal function, which is associated with aggressive strategies and the formation of conflicts. The aim of the agonal function for the speaker is to assert dominant claims in the fight against opposing ideologies. One option for this function is the exposing function, where the speaker reveals and criticizes the actions of his enemies in a negative light. This function helps to gain power and make influence by changing the audience's attitude towards the opponents.

In political discourse, politicians often employ various strategies to achieve their goals without resorting to direct insults. One of such strategies is the use of brilliant metaphors, which serve the purpose of discretion and can lead to success in political confrontations.

"There are different functions associated with this approach. The function of provocation involves intentional eliciting a verbal or non-verbal response from the audience to promote the speaker's interests. It aims to engage the addressee and provoke a reaction that aligns with the speaker's agenda" [15, p. 829]. The function of protection is a survival tactic employed by the addressee to deflect criticism or redirect it towards another politician. By shifting the focus away from themselves, they aim to avoid personal verbal aggression and shield themselves from potential backlash.

On the other hand, the function of promoting harmony focuses on conflict resolution and fostering peaceful relationships within the political communication process. This function aims to create psychological convergence and alleviate the burden of tension.

The function of relieving the psychological burden aims to ease the addressee's tension by diverting attention to a different direction. Metaphors are often used to evoke emotions and provide a sense of relief, helping to alleviate psychological stress.

The function of psychological proximity aims to reduce communicative distances and formalities in metaphorical communication. It fosters a sense of closeness and connection, enabling more intimate and personal interactions between the speaker and the addressee.

These functions demonstrate the multifaceted nature of political discourse, where metaphors and other linguistic tools are utilized to navigate conflicts, promote harmony, and achieve strategic objectives.

The speech act encompasses various levels of intensity, each of which can be expressed through verbal means. These levels interact with different types of intensities:

"Attractive intensity refers to the ability to capture and hold the attention of the audience. It involves employing persuasive techniques to engage and 'captivate' listeners.

Allocutive intensity focuses on constructing expressions that align with the norms and conventions of language. It involves using appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and syntax to ensure effective communication.

Informative intensity relates to the accurate reflection of facts and objective reality in the speech. It involves conveying information that is factual and reliable to inform the audience" [15, p. 830].

Special communicative intensity pertains to the speaker's attitude towards the information being expressed at the informative level. It involves conveying personal opinions, emotions, or evaluations that shape the speaker's perspective.

Analyzing political texts, it can be observed that pre-election campaigns in France often exhibit a high degree of negative intensity. This suggests that these campaigns frequently employ

strategies that emphasize criticism, opposition, or highlighting negative aspects to influence public opinion.

In summary, the speech act encompasses multiple levels of intensity, each with its own verbal expressions. Political texts, particularly pre-election campaigns in France, tend to showcase a significant presence of negative intensity.

This is related to the functions of the political discourse we mentioned above, as well as the specific features of the pre-election constituents. "The pre-election campaign is a militaristic metaphor based on the war model" [1, p. 54]. The following intensities are realized within this framework: intensity of persuading the sincerity of intent in relation to the fact and freemium intensity (ethnospecific targets (historical experience and traditions) of particular manipulative intensity and manipulation, including universal emotions and needs).

Each of the levels described above has a certain manipulative potential, but the intensity of the freemium activation is the greatest manipulative force as seen in the definitions of the proposed intensive components. Let us review one example of the realization of this intensity. Fear is the most commonly used manipulator of emotional cases [13]. Fear for own life, fear of impossibility to meet own basic needs, fear of alienation and misunderstanding, fear of being isolated from society or group are inherent in a human. The emotional state of conflict with fear is a sense of calm and a sense of "selfconfidence, the ability to provide for one's own needs" [7; 14]. For example: The "trou" (hole) in the term "Le bouclier fiscal est désormais de trou" stated at the newspaper "Humanité" metaphor consists of associative frames with negative emotional colors: excitement, fear and inefficiency of the action performed, instability, infertility, uncertainty. The Humanité newspaper is trying to create a picture of capital flowing by telling readers that the "tax armor" is completely ruined. Such figurative comparisons aimed at a wider community are, of course, more expressive than those in "dry" economic terms, and are clear even to people without economic education.

#### *Role of metaphors in expressing intensities*

The expression of intensities in frames of political discourse is often achieved through the conceptual metaphor [2; 8]. This is also due to the functional nature of the political dictatorship. Schekal (2000) [17] distinguishes the following functions of the political discourse from the point of view of systemic intensity: 1) Social control (manipulation of public consciousness); 2) Legalization of power (explanation or justification of any decision); 3) Reorganization of the power (strengthening of the system dependence); 4) Orientation (formation of the view of political reality in the minds of the societies); 5) Social solidarity (integration into societies or certain social groups); 6) Social differentiation (isolation of social groups); 7) Agonal (protesting against the activities of government bodies); 8) Action (activation, mobilization of supporters).

#### *Conflict*

This intensity is represented by military frames, weapons, and frames of war;

[...] Dans cette bataille qui s'engage, je vais vous dire qui est mon adversaire, mon véritable adversaire. Il n'a pas de nom, pas de visage, pas de parti, il ne présentera jamais sa candidature, il ne sera donc pas élu, et pourtant il gouverne. Cet adversaire, c'est le monde de la finance.... cooperation.

[...] Nous sommes ensemble, nous sommes un peuple où nous aimons nos différences, nos singularités, mais nous sommes conscients que nous sommes dans le même avenir commun, dans le même destin, et que nous avançons, là, les uns, les autres, certains plus en retard, d'autres plus en avance, mais dans la même voie du progrès et de la destinée humaine.

#### *Threat + warning*

[...] Je veux vous dire que ce sera difficile. Mais je veux vous dire que ce sera, aussi, un beau combat que nous allons livrer. Le combat ne s'arrête jamais. Ce n'est pas là celui d'une élection qui arriver. Ce sera celui, aussi, d'une transformation, d'un changement du pays.

Metaphor increases the manipulative potential of political discourse. The following groups of metaphors are often used in political manipulative communication:

1. Spatial metaphors. According to Telia [18], spatial coordinates are perceived in the human being as up or down, so future and past: The manifestation of a noble beginning is marked by an adjective *high* (high feelings, aspirations, motives), bad intentions are labeled as *low* and *down* (low feelings, low thoughts). These adjectives (upper, lower) are also typical of French thinking. "Haut" is associated with a positive situation, but a "bas" (lower) is associated with a negative situation. For example:

Le bonheur est vers le haut; la tristesse est vers le bas. (Happiness upper; misfortune lower). La santé et la vie sont vers le haut ; la maladie et la mort sont vers le bas. (Healthy and life upper; disease and death lower). Plus est vers le haut; moins est vers le bas. (Positive upper; negative lower). Bon est vers le haut; mauvais est vers le bas. (Good upper, bad lower).

2. Medical metaphors. Metaphorical models belonging to the concept of "medicine" (medical metaphors) and especially "disease" (morbial metaphors) are widely used in modern political texts [4]. In this case, all kinds of political events are figuratively presented as "physical and mental illnesses, and the desire to cure them". For example, the concept of "disease recurrence" is used politically in the context as a wrong move in the following example:

Après les propos ambigus du président du Parti chrétien démocrate (PCD) sur "les lobbies sionistes", c'est "à nouveau une récurrence", a-t-elle jugé sur RTL. Other examples: Mais la grande confusion – entre faits et mensonges, entre journalisme et divertissement, entre nombre de clics et qualité des sources – qui gangrène les médias... Elle s'observe tout autant hors de nos frontières, où la politique étrangère de la France, phagocytée comme jamais par la bien-pensance et les intérêts d'autres puissances "amies", n'en finit plus de se fourvoyer

The medical terms used figuratively are distinguished by their high functionality. For example, thanks to the metaphorical transfer, a stable structure based on the word *cœur* has emerged in the *au cœur de* ("in the center of something, in the middle of something").

- Le rapport Pébereau place l'envolée de la dette au cœur du débat politique
- Gérard Mulliez vit mon enquête comme si j'avais cassé un carreau et pénétré au cœur de son intimité ...
- La guerre de l'information est au cœur de la doctrine militaire russe

3. Household metaphor. Sometimes, the producent-politician refers to a certain simplification of the image in order to create the necessary associations, expressing it in simple words for the "ordinary people" (for the recipient), in everyday life terms. So that, a simple image, reflecting complex problems, achieves an associative purpose and the necessary prelocutive effect. In the most cases, such images refer to the construction, culinary, and other areas of life. For example: Chers amis, si j'en suis là, c'est le fruit de l'obstination [11].

An author sometimes tries to use enhanced metaphors (simple metaphors that combine several metaphorical expressions - in other words, consisting of simple metaphors that are interrelated and complement one another rather than simple literary metaphors. In this example, the journalist uses the verbs of *ratatouille* in addition to the culinary semantic domain (mijoter, cuire, recuire, velouter): ...politique, en France, c'est comme la ratatouille. C'est meilleur réchauffé. Ainsi François Mitterrand

a-t-il mijoté vingt-trois ans dans l'opposition avant que les Français le considèrent assez cuit, recuit et velouté par l'expérience et par l'échec pour prendre sa place à la table des presidents.

4. Phytonimic metaphor. For example, starting a business is called by the metaphor "semer des grains" (seed sowing), or achieving the results of any activity is called "cueillir des fruits" (fruit harvesting). On ne peut impunément faire de Bruxelles un bouc émissaire de ses propres échecs économiques durant des années sans féconder la graine eurosceptique In this example, "féconder la graine" is used in accordance with the denotation "Creation and development of skeptical ideas in Europe".

5. Military metaphor. The French political press widely uses military terminology to create a metaphorical structure. For example, the following constructions are widely used – bataille parlementaire (parliamentary battle), bataille politique (political battle), champs de bataille (battlefield), guerre froide (Cold War).

- Cela promet d'être la bataille parlementaire de la rentrée
- Le Parti socialiste souhaite faire de ce débat "une vraie bataille politique" à quelques mois des élections
- Or le couple qui assume la liberté des deux étrangers peut devenir un véritable champs de bataille
- ... elle ne croyait pas à la possibilité d'une nouvelle guerre froide
- Il y a trois ans, le service de Google s'était transformé en champ de bataille (battlefield) entre internautes israéliens et arabes, les uns et les autres se dénigrant mutuellement
- ...nos élites déphasées préfèrent l'enlisement dans un combat d'arrière-garde.

6. Art (theater, music etc.) metaphors. One of the broadest sample specimens belongs to the field of culture (music culture, dance, performances, and sports games [16]). For example, the democratic principles of the French government are presented as misleading and deceptive as the actor's nose in the next example. La preuve que les prétendus valeurs et principes démocratiques qui animent notre diplomatie sont en réalité à géométrie variable, qu'ils ne sont que le faux-nez d'un inavouable Munich permanent French political journalists often use the metaphor of individual authors to refer to dance. Républicains qui ont abandonné le navire de la campagne filloniste depuis quelques jours.

Encore un effort et l'on en aura fini avec la folle sarabande des tweets ravageurs...

The accusatory wave against Fillon is described as a metaphorical *mad saraband* (ancient national Spanish dance) in this example.

## 5 Conclusion

As a result of the analysis, it can be concluded that the expression of intensities in political and media discourses is largely implemented due to the conceptual metaphor. Metaphor is one of the main means making text more expressive, affecting the recipient's mind and keeping it away from sound thinking. The audience assimilates them and begins to change their political beliefs unknowingly. Various groups of metaphors (medical metaphors, household metaphors, military metaphors, economic metaphors, etc.) are used in political manipulative communication.

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