

A Comparison of Some Common Source Domains in Vietnamese and American English Political Discourses

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ABSTRACT: This article identifies, describes, and compares a number of common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses, with the aim of clarifying how politicians select source domains. In doing so, it affirms that through source–target mappings, abstract concepts and messages in political discourses are made concrete and more accessible to the public. A qualitative survey and analysis of 39 Vietnamese political discourse texts and 83 American English political discourse texts reveals that certain universal source domains such as JOURNEY, CONSTRUCTION, and FAMILY appear in both discourse systems, reflecting the way people conceptualize politics as a goal-directed process or a form of social construction. However, Vietnamese political discourses tend to prioritize source domains that emphasize collectivity, stability, and long-term orientation such as FAMILY and CONSTRUCTION; whereas American English political discourses are characterized by source domains that are competitive, confrontational, and individualized such as WAR, COMPETITION, and BUSINESS. These differences reflect the cultural characteristics, ideological orientations, and political organizational models of each country. The findings thus contribute to clarifying the relationship between language, cognition, and power in political discourses.

KEYWORDS: Conceptual metaphor, contrastive analysis, cognitive linguistics, political discourse, source domain.

1. INTRODUCTION

Conceptual metaphor has long been regarded as a central mechanism in structuring human thought and organizing human experience, particularly in abstract domains such as politics. According to Cognitive Linguistics, metaphor is not merely a rhetorical phenomenon, but also a cognitive tool that enables people to understand and interpret the world through more familiar domains of experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In political discourse, conceptual metaphor plays an important role in establishing "cognitive frames" (framing), thereby guiding the way the public receives, interprets, and evaluates political issues. Beyond simply reflecting reality, conceptual metaphors also contribute to constructing social reality by selecting and highlighting certain aspects of political phenomena, thus directly influencing the perceptions and behaviors of the community.

Thereby, the study of source domains, the foundational elements of conceptual metaphor, becomes particularly significant. Source domains provide concrete cognitive structures that are then mapped onto abstract target domains such as politics, economics, or society. Through this mapping, political concepts that are inherently complex and difficult to grasp are interpreted by means of familiar everyday experiences, such as war, journey, or family. Therefore, source domains do not merely serve as "image providers" but also shape the modes of thinking and reasoning in political discourse. In other words, the choice of which source domain is used to structure discourse directly influences the way political issues are understood and evaluated in society.

Beyond the cognitive dimension, conceptual metaphor in political discourse also carries clear strategic and ideological significance. Politics is a domain rich in metaphor because it involves abstract concepts such as power, nation, democracy, and development. These concepts that are difficult to grasp directly without the mediation of metaphorical structures. At the same time, different political systems tend to employ different metaphorical systems in order to reflect and reinforce their respective values, beliefs, and political orientations. From the perspective of discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis in particular, metaphor can be seen as a linguistic tool that helps legitimize power, shape public opinion, and reproduce social structures (Fairclough, 1995; McCarthy, 1991). Therefore, studying conceptual metaphor in political discourses not only helps clarify cognitive mechanisms, but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the nature of power and ideology in society.

Although there has been considerable research on metaphor, contrastive studies of conceptual metaphor in Vietnamese and American English political discourses remain relatively limited. Moreover, existing studies tend to focus on identifying metaphors without systematically categorizing the dominant source domains or analyzing their role in structuring discourse. Therefore, there is a need for more systematic comparative and contrastive research to clarify the similarities and differences in the use of conceptual



metaphors across political systems and in doing so, to shed light on how different political systems use metaphor to shape social cognition.

For these reasons, this study systematically describes and analyzes the common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses, and carries out a contrastive analysis to identify similarities and differences between the source domains of the two discourse systems. Drawing on Cognitive Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, the study goes beyond merely identifying metaphorical expressions to focus on explaining the mapping mechanisms between source and target domains, as well as their role in structuring political cognitive frames (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). At the same time, from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the study also examines how these source domains reflect and reproduce different cultural, ideological, and political organizational factors (Fairclough, 1995).

Specifically, the study focuses on the following objectives: (i) identifying the common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses; (ii) comparing these source domains to clarify similarities and differences; and (iii) explaining those differences on the basis of cultural, ideological, and political system-specific factors. To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) What source domains are commonly used in Vietnamese and American English political discourses? (2) What similarities and differences exist in the use of these source domains between the two discourse systems? And (3) What do these differences reveal about the political thinking, culture, and ideology of each country?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is developed on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach, combining Cognitive Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis, while employing a contrastive method to clarify the differences in source domain selection across the two discourse systems. This approach not only helps identify surface-level linguistic structures but also delves into the cognitive and ideological mechanisms underlying political discourse. Therefore, discourse is not merely a means of conveying information, but a social practice that contributes to constructing and maintaining power relations in society (Fairclough, 1995).

First, the study applies the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to identify and analyze metaphorical structures in political discourse. According to this theory, conceptual metaphor is understood as a systematic mapping from a concrete source domain onto an abstract target domain, through which people understand and organize their experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In the political context, target domains such as nation, power, and development are often structured through familiar source domains such as war, journey, or family. Specifically, the study identifies metaphorical linguistic expressions in the data, infers the corresponding conceptual metaphors, and classifies them by source domain. Beyond mere identification, the study also clarifies the mapping mechanisms between source and target domains, thereby showing how metaphors contribute to structuring political thinking and shaping public understanding of political issues.

Second, the study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to clarify the role of metaphor as an ideological tool in political discourse. From the CDA perspective, language not only reflects social reality but also contributes to reproducing and legitimizing power relations (Fairclough, 1995). Accordingly, conceptual metaphors are not random choices, but are typically strategic in nature, aimed at orienting public understanding within frameworks that are favorable to the discourse producer. For this reason, the study analyzes metaphors not only at the linguistic level but also in relation to their specific social, cultural, and political contexts.

In addition, the study employs a contrastive method to compare the use of conceptual metaphor and source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses, with the aim of clarifying similarities and differences in how the two political systems use metaphor to structure thought and convey messages. The comparative analysis focuses on identifying the most common source domains, their frequency of occurrence, and the ways in which metaphors are deployed in each context. Furthermore, the study explains these differences on the basis of cultural, ideological, and political system-specific factors.

Finally, the study also makes use of qualitative statistical methods to support the analytical process. Specifically, once the source domains have been identified, their frequency in each dataset is recorded, thereby helping to identify the dominant source domains in each discourse system. It should be emphasized, however, that this statistical component is not intended as a purely quantitative exercise, but primarily serves to support the qualitative analysis, helping to reinforce observations about metaphor usage trends and enhancing the objectivity of the research.



3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Conceptual metaphor and source domains

Conceptual metaphor is considered one of the core foundations of Cognitive Linguistics, in which metaphor is not merely a rhetorical phenomenon but a cognitive mechanism that enables people to understand and organize their experience. Specifically, people commonly use concrete, familiar experiences to comprehend abstract and complex concepts through a process of systematic mapping between cognitive domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Therefore, conceptual metaphor not only reflects the way people talk about the world but also shapes the way they think and act within it. This is particularly significant in abstract domains such as politics, where concepts like power, nation, or development cannot be grasped directly but must be approached through metaphorical structures.

Within this theoretical framework, the two central components of conceptual metaphor are the source domain and the target domain. Source domains are typically concrete, readily recognizable areas of experience such as war, journey, or the human body while target domains are more abstract fields such as politics or society. The mapping process occurs when the structures, relations, and properties of the source domain are transferred onto the target domain, thereby helping to structure and clarify abstract concepts. Mapping is therefore not a matter of coincidental resemblance, but a systematic and deeply cognitive process in which certain aspects of the source domain are selected and highlighted while others may be obscured (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The role of the source domain is thus particularly important in structuring thought and establishing cognitive frames (framing). Beyond providing illustrative imagery, source domains carry their own internal logic, orienting the way people think and reason. In political discourse, the choice of which source domain is used to frame political issues directly influences how the public understands and evaluates those issues. For instance, when politics is structured as a war, elements such as confrontation, victory, and defeat are foregrounded; conversely, when structured as a journey, elements such as goals, progress, and direction of development become central. Studying source domains therefore not only helps identify metaphorical structures but also contributes to clarifying the fundamental cognitive mechanisms of political discourse.

3.2. Metaphor in political discourse

From the perspective of Discourse Analysis, political discourse is regarded as a social practice in which language plays a central role in constructing and maintaining power relations. According to Fairclough (1995), language is not a neutral tool but is always embedded in specific social, cultural, and ideological contexts. Political discourse therefore does not merely reflect political realities but also contributes to shaping the way those realities are understood and interpreted in society. The study of conceptual metaphor in political discourse has consequently become an important approach for clarifying the relationship between language, power, and cognition.

Conceptual metaphor in political discourse performs several important functions, most notably persuasion, the shaping of public opinion, and the legitimization of power. In terms of persuasion, metaphor helps simplify complex political issues by connecting them to familiar experiences, thereby making messages easier to understand and accept. Beyond this, metaphor also contributes to shaping public opinion by establishing particular cognitive frames in which certain aspects of an issue are highlighted while others are concealed. The selection of metaphors is therefore not arbitrary but strategic, aimed at guiding the way the public thinks about political issues. In addition, metaphor plays an important role in legitimizing power. By drawing on positive or familiar source domains, politicians can present their policies or actions as rational, necessary, or inevitable. Metaphor is thus not merely a linguistic tool but also a means of reinforcing the legitimacy of political decisions.

Beyond its communicative functions, metaphor is also a significant ideological instrument in political discourse. According to Critical Discourse Analysis, linguistic structures including metaphors contribute to maintaining and reproducing ideological systems in society (Fairclough, 1995). Metaphor can therefore be used to reinforce certain values, beliefs, and political viewpoints while obscuring or marginalizing opposing perspectives. Far from merely reflecting ideology, metaphor also participates in the formation of ideology by orienting the way people understand and interpret the world. Analyzing conceptual metaphor in political discourses thus not only deepens our understanding of language but also helps illuminate the mechanisms of power and ideology in society.

3.3. Source domain classification framework

In the study of conceptual metaphor, developing a source domain classification framework is particularly important for



systematizing data and providing a basis for contrastive analysis. Such a framework not only helps identify common types of metaphor but also allows for comparison of how different discourse systems employ common source domains to structure political thought. The selection and analysis of prevalent source domains thus play a key role in clarifying the cognitive characteristics of political discourse. The main source domains are outlined as follows:

The source domain of JOURNEY structures politics as a developmental process oriented toward a particular goal. Elements such as "starting point," "route," "obstacles," and "destination" are mapped onto political processes, thereby emphasizing the continuity and directionality of development. This source domain thus generates a positive and goal-oriented understanding of policies and development strategies.

The source domain of CONSTRUCTION conceptualizes the nation as a structure that needs to be designed, built, and refined. Concepts such as "foundation," "structure," and "construction" are used to interpret political processes, emphasizing the role of planning, organization, and cooperation. Beyond conveying a technical understanding, this source domain also helps reinforce an image of stability and sustainable development.

The source domain of FAMILY structures the state as a family, in which political relationships are interpreted through kinship relations such as those between parents and children or between siblings. Values such as solidarity, responsibility, and care are foregrounded, creating a humanistic and relatable cognitive frame.

The source domain of BODY conceptualizes the nation as a living organism, in which different parts of society correspond to different parts of the body. This allows political problems to be interpreted as "disorders" or "diseases" requiring "treatment," thereby emphasizing the integrity and interdependence of the components of society.

The source domain of NATURE structures politics through natural phenomena, such as "waves," "currents," or "storms." Political processes may be portrayed as inevitable or difficult to control, thereby contributing to the legitimization of certain developments.

The source domain of GAME/COMPETITION views politics as a game with rules, strategies, and winners. This highlights the competitive and tactical dimensions of political activity, while also reflecting a market-oriented and individualized understanding of politics.

The source domain of WAR is one of the most prevalent in political discourse, structuring politics as a conflict between opposing forces. Elements such as "adversary," "strategy," "attack," and "victory" are mapped onto the political domain, emphasizing confrontation and competition. Beyond highlighting the urgency and intensity of political issues, this source domain can also be used to mobilize public support by constructing a sense of a "common enemy."

Finally, the source domain of DISEASE structures society as a body that can become "infected," in which social problems are treated as "illnesses" requiring "diagnosis" and "treatment." This source domain serves to underscore the urgency of political and social issues and the need for intervention.

Together, these source domains form a rich cognitive system through which people structure their understanding and interpretation of political phenomena. On this basis, the classification framework will be used as an analytical tool in the subsequent sections to clarify the similarities and differences in source domain usage between Vietnamese and American English political discourses.

4. ANALYSIS OF SOURCE DOMAINS

4.1. Common source domains in Vietnamese political discourses

Vietnamese political discourses are generally characterized by collectivity, goal-orientation, and an emphasis on long-term stability. The source domains selected typically reflect values such as agency, solidarity, sustainable development, and the pursuit of shared national goals. Accordingly, source domains such as HUMAN BEING, CONSTRUCTION, JOURNEY, FAMILY, and WAR are prevalent and play a central role in structuring political thought.

The source domain of CONSTRUCTION is one of the most common in Vietnamese political discourses, manifested in expressions such as "building the country" and "constructing development." This source domain is mapped onto the target domain of politics/the nation, whereby elements such as foundation, structure, and the construction process are transformed into concepts relating to policy, institutions, and development. Politics is thus understood as a long-term process of nation-building that requires perseverance, planning, and coordination. Beyond helping to make development goals more concrete, this source domain also



emphasizes stability and sustainability, thereby reflecting the strategic orientation of Vietnamese political discourse. At the same time, the use of the construction source domain helps reinforce an ideology that emphasizes the role of the state in shaping and guiding social development.

The source domain of JOURNEY is also widely used in Vietnamese political discourses, particularly in expressions such as "the path toward socialism." This source domain provides elements such as starting point, route, obstacles, and destination, which are mapped onto the target domain of political and social development. Politics is thereby understood as a purposefully directed process of movement toward a clearly defined goal. This not only creates a goal-oriented cognitive frame but also reinforces belief in the inevitability and legitimacy of the development path. Beyond reflecting long-term strategic thinking, this source domain also contributes to shaping public perception in the direction of stability and consistency.

The source domain of FAMILY is evident in expressions such as "national unity," in which the nation is conceptualized as a unified community bound by close relationships. Values such as unity, responsibility, and mutual support are mapped from the source domain of "family" onto the target domain of "nation." Politics is thus understood not merely as a matter of state governance but as the maintenance and cultivation of harmonious social relationships. Beyond creating a sense of familiarity and consensus, this source domain also reflects an ideology that prioritizes collectivity and the common good, consistent with the characteristic features of Vietnamese political discourses.

The source domain of WAR, although not deployed in a direct sense, nevertheless appears in symbolic metaphorical form through expressions such as "the economic front" and "the fight against corruption." In these cases, elements of war such as enemy, battle line, and victory are mapped onto domains such as economics and governance. In Vietnamese political discourses, this source domain tends to be associated with historical memory and carries strong symbolic significance. Its use therefore serves not only to underscore the urgency of the issue at hand but also to evoke the spirit of national solidarity and the will to overcome adversity.

To sum up, the common source domains in Vietnamese political discourses reveal a highly collective cognitive system oriented toward stability and long-term development. In this context, political discourse functions not merely to convey information but also to guide public perception and reinforce ideological values. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, these metaphors can be seen as contributing to the maintenance and reproduction of a form of political discourse that emphasizes consensus, the central role of the state, and the goal of sustainable development (Fairclough, 1995).

4.2. Common source domains in American English political discourses

Unlike Vietnamese political discourses, American English political discourses are more competitive, individualistic, and confrontational, reflecting the characteristics of a multi-party political system and a dynamic electoral environment. The source domains employed therefore tend to emphasize opposition, competition, and the dynamic nature of political life. Source domains such as WAR, GAME/COMPETITION, BUSINESS/MARKET, and JOURNEY play an important role in structuring discourse.

The source domain of WAR is one of the most prominent, manifested in expressions such as "war on terror" and "fight inflation." Elements such as enemy, strategy, and victory are mapped directly onto political and economic issues. Politics is thus conceptualized as an ongoing battle in which problems are presented as threats requiring urgent response. Beyond creating a sense of urgency, this source domain also helps mobilize public support by constructing a clearly confrontational cognitive frame. At the same time, the use of war metaphors reflects an ideology that emphasizes strength, action, and decisiveness.

The source domain of GAME/COMPETITION is evident in expressions such as "win elections" and "political game," in which politics is viewed as a contest with winners and losers. Elements such as rules, tactics, and outcomes are mapped onto political processes, particularly elections. Politics is thereby understood as a competitive arena in which individuals and organizations must strive to win. Beyond reflecting the competitive nature of the American political system, this source domain also contributes to creating a dramatic form of discourse that captures public attention.

The source domain of BUSINESS/MARKET also plays an important role, manifested in expressions such as "economic growth" and "investment." Concepts from the domain of market economics are mapped onto politics, emphasizing efficiency, profit, and resource optimization. Politics is thus understood not merely as state governance but as a process managed according to market logic. Beyond reflecting the central role of economics in American society, this source domain also reveals the strong influence of liberal economic ideology in political discourse.

The source domain of JOURNEY also appears in American English political discourses, in expressions such as "moving forward" and "path to freedom." However, unlike in Vietnamese political discourses, this source domain tends to be more



individualized, placing greater emphasis on personal choice and individual effort. The journey belongs not only to the nation but also to each individual in their pursuit of freedom and success. The journey source domain thus reflects a value system that prioritizes individualism and freedom of choice.

In summary, the source domains in American English political discourses reveal a cognitive system that is strongly individualistic, highly competitive, and emotionally charged. Political discourse in this context functions not only to convey information but also to capture attention and persuade audiences in a competitive political environment. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, these metaphors contribute to reproducing a form of political discourse that emphasizes competition, individual freedom, and economic efficiency (Fairclough, 1995).

5. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section aims to compare the common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses, thereby clarifying the similarities and differences in the way the two political systems structure thought and convey messages. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, comparing source domains not only helps identify linguistic patterns but also reveals how political cognition is shaped by culture and ideology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This affirms that metaphors are not merely rhetorical devices but are means of organizing thought and orienting social action.

5.1. Similarities

Despite clear differences in political systems and cultural contexts, Vietnamese and American English political discourses share a number of common source domains. This can be explained from a cognitive perspective, according to which conceptual metaphors typically arise from universal bodily and social experiences. In other words, people across different cultures still tend to use familiar source domains such as journey or construction to understand abstract concepts like politics. These similarities therefore reflect the universality of metaphorical thinking, while also demonstrating a degree of compatibility in how political reality is interpreted across the two countries.

One of the most representative source domains illustrating this similarity is JOURNEY. In both discourse systems, politics is conceptualized as a journey with a point of departure, a route, and a destination. Expressions such as "the path toward socialism" in Vietnamese political discourses and "moving forward" and "path to freedom" in American English political discourses all demonstrate the mapping from the source domain of "journey" onto the target domain of "political and social development." The journey metaphor thus helps create a goal-oriented cognitive frame in which progress is understood as forward movement. Beyond providing a sense of purpose and direction, this source domain also reinforces confidence in the future, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of political strategies (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

In addition, the source domain of CONSTRUCTION also appears in both discourse systems, albeit with differing frequency and nuance. Expressions such as "building the country" and "constructing development" in Vietnamese political discourses, and expressions related to "building the nation" in American English political discourses, all reflect a mapping from the domain of physical construction onto the political domain. Politics is thereby understood as a process of establishing and improving social structures. Beyond making development goals more concrete, this metaphor also emphasizes the responsibility of political actors to "design" and "build" society. The construction source domain thus contributes to creating a positive, development-oriented discourse that looks toward continuous improvement.

In sum, the similarities in the use of common source domains across Vietnamese and American English political discourses reflect a shared need in political discourse to build social consensus and guide public perception. Beyond reflecting the universality of cognitive experience, these metaphors also function as strategic tools for legitimizing political goals. From a cognitive theoretical perspective, these shared source domains serve as evidence that human thought is inherently imagistic and experience-dependent, regardless of cultural or institutional differences.

5.2. Differences

Alongside the similarities, the differences in source domain usage between Vietnamese and American English political discourses represent the true focus of this research. These differences are evident not only in the choice of source domains but also in how they are deployed and in the ideological meanings they convey.

First, the contrast between collectivity in Vietnamese political discourses and individualism in American English political



discourses is clearly reflected in the source domains employed. While Vietnamese political discourses tend to use metaphors such as "national unity" to emphasize community unity, American English political discourses use expressions like "win elections" and "political game" to foreground the role of individual actors in political competition. Therefore, source domains in Vietnamese political discourses serve to reinforce collective identity, those in American English political discourses emphasize individual agency and achievement. This reflects a profound difference in the cultural and political foundations of the two countries.

Second, the contrast between stability and competition is also clearly evident in the use of conceptual metaphor. Vietnamese political discourses, with source domains such as construction and journey, typically emphasizes long-term development and stability. American English political discourses, by contrast, draws on war and game metaphors to create a cognitive frame characterized by competition and constant flux. Politics in the American context is thus conceptualized as a process of unceasing struggle, whereas in Vietnam it is understood as a directed process of purposeful nation-building.

Third, a contrast can be observed between directionality and debate in the two discourse systems. Vietnamese political discourses tend to be clearly directive, using metaphors such as "the path toward socialism" to establish a specific development trajectory. American English political discourses, by contrast, is highly argumentative and contestatory, as reflected in metaphors such as "fight inflation" and "war on terror," in which issues are presented as challenges to be addressed through debate and action. Beyond reflecting differences in discursive style, this also points to differences in how power is organized and how political interaction is conducted.

Finally, the contrast between the FAMILY source domain in Vietnamese political discourses and the GAME/COMPETITION source domain in American English political discourses is also noteworthy. While Vietnamese political discourses conceptualize the nation as a family, emphasizing solidarity and shared responsibility, American English political discourses conceptualize politics as a game in which actors compete to win. From this perspective, source domains not only reflect understandings of politics but also shape the ways in which the public engages with political life.

Therefore, the differences in source domains give rise to fundamental differences in how politics is understood and practiced. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, these metaphors not only reflect but also reproduce the power structures and ideological systems of each society (Fairclough, 1995).

5.3. Explaining the differences

The differences outlined above are not coincidental but are deeply rooted in factors such as ideology, culture, and political models, as elaborated below.

First, ideology plays an important role in shaping dominant source domains. Vietnamese political discourses, with its socialist orientation, tends to emphasize values such as collectivity, solidarity, and sustainable development. This is reflected in the use of source domains such as family, construction, and journey. American English political discourses, by contrast, is shaped by liberal individualist ideology and prioritizes source domains such as war, competition, and market, thereby emphasizing dynamism and competitiveness.

Second, culture is also a significant factor. Vietnamese culture, with its tradition of valuing community and social harmony, tends to produce metaphors oriented toward reinforcing social unity. American culture, by contrast, prizes individualism and self-reliance, leading to the use of metaphors that emphasize competition and personal achievement. Source domains are therefore not only cognitive tools but also expressions of deeply held cultural values.

Third, political models also directly influence the use of metaphor. The Vietnamese political system is directive in nature, and metaphors are therefore typically used to reinforce consensus and guide public perception. The American political system, by contrast, is characterized by multi-party competition and electoral contestation, creating an environment in which metaphors function as tools of persuasion and competition. Beyond reflecting institutional structures, this also demonstrates the role of language in maintaining and reproducing political practices.

The dominant source domains in political discourses therefore not only reflect the way people understand the world but also reveal the close relationship between language, thought, and social structure. Comparing the common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses thus not only clarifies differences in metaphor use but also provides a foundation for a deeper understanding of the nature of political discourse in each context.



6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, this study has clarified the common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses and identified the fundamental similarities and differences between the two systems. Specifically, Vietnamese political discourse is characterized by source domains such as CONSTRUCTION, JOURNEY, FAMILY/COMMUNITY, and symbolic WAR, reflecting an orientation toward stability, collectivity, and long-term development. American English political discourses, by contrast, makes prominent use of source domains such as WAR, GAME/COMPETITION, BUSINESS/MARKET, and JOURNEY, thereby expressing competitiveness, individualism, and directness. Beyond certain universal points of similarity, particularly in the JOURNEY and CONSTRUCTION source domains, the differences in how source domains are selected and deployed reveal profound divergences in the way political thought is structured. The findings of the contrastive analysis of common source domains in Vietnamese and American English political discourses can therefore be regarded as the core contribution of this study, helping to clarify the relationship between language, cognition, and social context.

In terms of contributions, this study first carries theoretical significance in clarifying the role of source domains in structuring political discourse, while also adding a contrastive perspective between Vietnam and the United States, two contexts that differ markedly in ideology and culture. Beyond description, the study also demonstrates how conceptual metaphors contribute to reproducing values and power structures in society. From a practical standpoint, the findings help raise awareness of the role of language in orienting political thought, and may therefore be applied in the analysis of media, discourse, and the construction of effective political messaging. This approach is also consistent with the orientation of Critical Discourse Analysis, which emphasizes the relationship between language, power, and ideology (Fairclough, 1995).

In terms of future directions, the research may be extended in several ways to deepen the findings already achieved. One promising avenue is to expand the scope of analysis to media discourse, where conceptual metaphors are reproduced and transformed in the process of information dissemination. In addition, combining quantitative analytical methods with large-scale data could help verify and generalize the findings more systematically. It is clear that research on conceptual metaphor and source domains in political discourse still holds considerable potential for development, not only in academic terms but also in terms of its applied value in an increasingly complex media and political landscape.

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Cite this Article: Hong, N.X. (2026). A Comparison of Some Common Source Domains in Vietnamese and American English Political Discourses. International Journal of Current Science Research and Review, 9(5), pp. 2601-2608. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V9-i5-33>