

METAPHOR USE IN THE LIBYAN MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC NEWS

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Abstract: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the health-care systems of the transition countries experienced serious problems in the aspect of delivering adequate health care. Hence, during the recent pandemic, institutions and organizations across the world, such as Libya, started using the telehealth technology as it creates another line of communication and direct physician-patient interviews to avoid the spread of COVID-19. The objective of this study is to interpret the metaphors used in three Libyan mainstream media to determine the metaphorical depiction of COVID-19 in Libya's mainstream media and to determine the newspapers that used more metaphors in the representation of COVID-19. Findings unveiled that war was the most dominant metaphor in the Libyan newspapers that were used in trying to convince the people about their activities in reducing the pandemic; however, the newspapers opted not to use the same metaphor as in the news. This study recommends that figurative language be seen as a tool to better understand concepts; metaphors in modern social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc., also need to be investigated. Future studies may focus on how social media affects communication using metaphors. Finally, metaphors could be investigated as a tool for exchanging knowledge about cultures since they emerge through various cultural and social networks.

Keywords: Metaphor, Media, Mainstream, Coverage, COVID-19

1. Introduction

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) or COVID-19, first identified in Hubei, Wuhan, China, in December 2019, first broke out in China and could spread fast within days. It spread across the Chinese borders and travelled to the rest of the world, thus creating a pandemic. According to sources, COVID-19 has so far infected over 34.4 million people and led to the death of over one million people in 180 countries until October 2nd, 2020. Following the death rates declared in each country, governmental bodies escalated their efforts in prevention, even where there existed tremendous uncertainties. One of the measures entails the responsibility of preventing the crisis using media as communication tools. Media has been employed to sensitize the people about critical political and public issues, in the case, COVID-19. Despite that, studies have demonstrated that during times of crisis, the public and the media rally round the flag, resulting in significant decreases in criticality and near-unconditional support for national or regional leaders (David, 2021). As a result, this study concentrated on how the Libyan media, specifically newspapers, implemented metaphors in covering the COVID-19 pandemic news. In Libya, almost the entire government sectors are closed because of the pandemic, and this has messed up the government sector, creating the need for alternatives. The Infrastructure of Libya has been negatively impacted by the civil war and financial crises of the country; this has increased the value of alternative means such as newspapers as a result of blackouts and bad internet connections. The newspapers are a mass communication medium in the form of public and policy conversation. Using the print media, one can be aware of what the public is interested in, because it works as a connection that illuminates one on what the other is interested in (Singh et al., 2021).

Newspapers topped the scene during COVID-19, both in developing countries and developed countries, such as the United Kingdom. It has become a major national and international health information source (Rizvee & Zaber, 2021) to communicate with the public. The media, including print media, employs a variety of discursive techniques, like the usage of metaphors, to effectively enlighten the public. Metaphor is a comparison and an equivalence of two independently or only tangentially related items. In other words, metaphors are used to compare two objects to convey meanings. It is a tool that effectively helps the audience to concretize ideas through clear visuals that allow the eyes of one's mind to see things differently and ultimately solve problems creatively. They serve various purposes, such as to aid in the vivid visualization of new concepts and explain new conditions in a relevant way.

Metaphors gain epistemological and ontological legitimacy as a media research tool. One of the fundamental assumptions of any research project, qualitative or quantitative, is that it aims to get a better understanding of the environment under consideration. Metaphors allow a better understanding of newly-introduced information to be achieved due to they reason that it use a familiar idea to link from one to another, which helps to convey meaning. Despite extended history studies into the form and function of rhetorical figures in communication (Crocker, 2016; Osborn & Ehninger, 1962), the incorporation of conceptual metaphor theory by the discipline has been unexpectedly uncritical in economics and finance (Eubanks, 1999; Kecskes, 2004), education (Goulden & Griffin, 1995; Staton & Peeples, 2000), family interactions (Buzzanell & Burrell, 1997; McKimm-Breschkin et al., 2003), illness, disease and journalism (Bradac, 2001; Kitis & Milapides, 1997), organisational communication, corporate communication and ideology (Ausmus, 1998; Deetz, 1984), social science (Danaher, 1998), as well as war (Kuusisto, 2002; Lule, 2004; Medhurst et al., 1998). This indicates that Lakoff's explanations on metaphorical thinking have been debated in many other fields and need to be cross-examined to determine whether or not it is to be considered a valuable analytical construct in communication research.

There is no doubt that several aspects of human life are influenced by mass media. Massive use of media is aimed at informing the public on the political issues, opposing opinions, and pronouncements; therefore, it is essential to come up and introduce new points of information flow. Nevertheless, even though there has been more focus on the role of media in such cases as COVID-19, few studies have been made on this aspect. For instance, in Libya, COVID-19 has caused a great use of media to encourage public cooperation, but not many studies have been conducted on the media discourse, let alone on the employment of metaphors as one of the most effective communication tools used by the media. Hence, to fill the felt gap, this study was conducted on the use of metaphors by the media in Libya during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main goal of the current study is to determine the metaphors used to report on COVID-19 in three mainstream newspapers in Libya. The media has a significant impact on public opinions, and its use reveals facts about public opinions and political communication. Furthermore, the political significance of media coverage has an influence on public opinions, which is evident in the literature. The importance of metaphors in reasoning and in affecting public opinions is another area of study that has been established in a larger body of work. Hence, the pervasiveness of the role of metaphors in thinking is a valuable outcome of this research. On the other hand, relatively little research has been done to examine how metaphors in languages influence the way individuals think and solve real-world situations. Finally, this research will enhance the knowledge pool in the area of metaphor media, particularly features of metaphor media used in the context of Libya, as it is a less-researched area.

2. Theoretical Framework

The underlying theoretical basis of the research under consideration is the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). This theory explained that metaphors are always evident but hard to define. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believed that metaphors are the ones that enable us to see and feel the world in a specific manner. In other words, we are in a position to be affected by metaphors in terms of our perceptions and actions. Therefore, the theoretical framework for this study is referred to as Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which was proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The best way to increase one's ability to spot metaphors is to practice and study them, considering that it

tends to be challenging to spot at times. It is feasible to learn how to recognize and analyze metaphors methodically, which is by examining a statement or phrase to see if it compares two objects using prepositions such as “as” or “like” (which indicates that it is explicitly comparing things). Furthermore, there is a possibility that it is still a metaphor even though it compares objects without the existence of prepositions such as “like” or “as.” To examine the metaphors used, consider the following questions:

- i. What exactly is the subject of discussion (the tenor)?
- ii. To what is the thing (the automobile) being compared to?
- iii. How does this develop significance in the text?
- iv. What characteristics does the “vehicle” have?
- v. What effect do they have on your perception of the “tenor”?
- vi. What does this analogy have to do with the text’s themes?
- vii. Using a T.E.E.L structure, discuss your findings. Keep in mind that all metaphors should be able to be described as follows: ‘The composer merges love with a voyage to suggest that all loves, like voyages, must come to an end.’

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The current chapter reviews studies on metaphor in relation to Cognitive Theory, focusing on specific approaches, namely Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), pragmatics, and the social cognitive approach to discourse and the use of metaphors. In addition to that, the study utilizes Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), accompanied by a theoretical and methodological framework from cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and CDA, to examine the use of metaphors in the present study. The chapter also reviews some of the most common source domains in metaphor research and those that are relevant to this study. The media discourse of news reports and significant factors that influence their production are also reviewed. The importance of metaphors in improving organisational management cannot be overstated. However, the following assumptions can be made;

- (i) Metaphors may help companies overcome a variety of problems created by inadequate management approaches by improving the unity of all stakeholders and sharing ideas to produce genuine results.
- (ii) Metaphors may not correctly portray the underlying strength or capacity of, for example, a leader in any management function within a corporation.
- (iii) Other than their use in literary and holy writings, metaphors are used by politicians who employ them for persuasiveness.
- (iv) Figurative language, notably metaphors, may have a strong impact on media; the role of metaphors in media is not necessarily decorative (Latif et al., 2019); the opposite is used to frame one issue in terms of another, or different such as the metaphors of Arab Spring discourse, opening up new approach for social sciences to look at and investigate those social and media developments, given that language is such an important indicator of change in many areas of life.

The study of the language used by the media is an area of research known as “media sciences” (Latif et al., 2019). During the eras of ancient Greeks and Romans, and particularly in the 17th century, Thomas Hobbes presented a modern media philosophy that became a base for media science study. Therefore, due to the many works made by previous scholars in the field, numerous recent scholars have researched “media language” and claimed that politics and language are related. Various scholars (Alexander, 1997; Alzoraiki, 2021; Casanovas, 2019; Hettich & Kachi, 2022) argued that the language of media is a significant form of language due to its objectives of developing an effect on human beings. As such, it is important to consider the media metaphor being a complicated human activity. Hence, analyzing the language of media and its connection with various crucial factors that can affect its production has been given great emphasis by researchers (Kim & Kim, 2021). Due to the importance of metaphors in media, the current research attempts to examine “The history of COVID-19 in Libya, as well as media

statements made by Fayez Mustafa al-Sarraj and speeches made by Libyan ministers during COVID-19” (Hweio, 2020; Refaat, 2021).

3.2 Metaphor

A brief overview of the different views of metaphor and their interrelationships is covered in this section to provide a framework for studying and exploring the metaphor of globalization. Metaphors are valued for their potential to provide pre-existing insights into reality based on theories that emphasize their descriptive power. Arguably, this view was mostly influenced by Aristotle (Wood, 2015), who defined metaphor as “giving an element a name that belongs to something else; the transfer from genus to species, or from species to genus, or species to species”. According to Aristotle, metaphor provides an insight by highlighting parts of reality that should not be noticed. As in philosophy, he said, “a sensitive mind will detect similarities even between distant objects” (Aristotle, 1412a, 2007). However, Aristotle’s admiration for metaphors was reserved. Unlike literal language, a metaphor is a kind of figurative language where words are used to give meaning that is different from their original ones, to obscure facts with absurdity or parallels. The challenge, according to the Aristotelian metaphorical perspective, is to expand the imagination while remaining within appropriate limits and considering the similarities that underpin the work (Johnson, 1980: 7). It is therefore better to use metaphors when they reflect the reality (Kittay, 1987: 3). In the history, Aristotelian views of metaphors have had the result of putting metaphor in the categories of rhetoric and poetry rather than the sphere of philosophy. Therefore, viewed from the perspective of the classical school of thought, the use of metaphors as a device of rhetoric is questionable, but in the eyes of medieval theologians, metaphors are related to the revealed truth by God and the order of the cosmos. Nowadays, the application of metaphors was developed under the creation of both the empirical and the positivist conceptions of language from the seventeenth century through the 1968 works of Hobbes and the 1988 works of Locke. They have criticized all kinds of figurative language that distorts a proper understanding of reality through literal language. Metaphor has been studied since the Sophists, Plato, and especially Aristotle. Metaphor remains an important field of study, for example, in nature, social sciences, and linguistics, to name a few. “Metaphor” is derived from the Greek word *metapherein*, where “meta” means “exceeding” and “pherein” means “to carry”, which generally refers to the process of creating parallels or patterns of similarity between different things, environments, and/or experiences (Yonguo, 2013). Kovecses (2002) mentions that “metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another by saying that one is the other, as in, He is a lion”. Although various theories are being emphasized by researchers, all of them regard metaphors as a tool to abstractly or concretely explain the unknown in terms of familiarity, or to compare different objects and/or phenomena. Meanwhile, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) defined target and source domains, while Black (1980) defined focus and frame domains. However, there seems to be a basic consensus that metaphors link multiple domains of meaning. Theorists of metaphor, however, disagree with the idea that metaphors are grafted. To identify the main idea of the metaphor, it is significant to understand the person’s view of the relationship between metaphor and ‘reality’. Three major perspectives, although not contradictory, emerge from this:

- i) A theory that focuses on metaphor’s ability to explain reality.
- ii) A theory that tests metaphor’s ability to shape reality; and
- iii) A theory that proposes the potential of metaphors as a medium to criticize as well as modify our reality.

Metaphor is commonly used in the media as a linguistic strategy, especially in English news media discourse. According to Feinstein (1982), metaphors are linguistic symbols that provide tangible names for abstract notions. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that indicates an idea or meaning is used to stand for another idea or object and draw similarities or differences between them. As claimed by Thibodeau et al. (2019), linguists believe that metaphors are the most persuasive form of metaphor media and the simplest approach to reaching people’s awareness. Furthermore, David (2014) states that metaphors assist the general audience to comprehend the significance of media events and make them feel inclusive by being a part of the process. An example of how metaphors are used in the media is when, in 2012, former U.S. governor Rick Santorum used media advertisements to brutally

attack a fellow Republican, former U.S. governor Mitt Romney, in the race to represent the Republicans. In the negative advertisement campaign, the Romney look-alike, in a 'Rambo' demeanor, was using a fake machine gun, firing at Rick Santorum's life-size cardboard cut-out, but was missing all the time. In the end, the Romney look-alike got himself stained in mud when he tried to fix the fake machine gun that was firing ammunition made of mud. The gun is used as a metaphor for Romney's mouth in attack mode, and in the end, this verbal attack against Santorum is going to backfire. This parody aimed at Romney as 'Rambo' was Santorum's effort to stay in the lead and was aired in the state of Michigan until the Grand Old Party (GOP) debate. The following explains the effect of the metaphor employed:

1. The first rhetorical effect is how Rick Santorum uses the Rambo character of Mitt Romney. This is because the Rambo character in the movie was a peaceful and law-abiding former ranger who focused on himself until the police (the villain) pushed him into a brick wall. He got him back, and he had to fight. Mitt Romney continues his negative campaign, creating a suitable environment for Rick Santorum to fight back. The Rambo symbol could have been misused, while the ad was mocking and satirical. The implication behind the ad is that Santorum is an innocent activist, with a picture of him and his family showing a quiet family man, and Romney claims to be the attacker, Rambo. Advertising mud represents the dirty or negative tactics Romney used in his campaigns against Santorum and other Republicans. The mud that Mitt Romney symbolically fired never reaches Rick Santorum, who believes that he is being attacked by Romney because Romney is trying to disguise himself as his supporter, and what he has done by hiding behind cement pillars, reflecting Romney's supporters (i.e., Romney cares).
2. The second rhetorical effect is how Rick Santorum is showing Mitt Romney that he is firing his mouth off to cover up Romney's wrongdoing by supporting cap and trade, which allows companies that do not meet the greenhouse gas emissions standard to be given credits from other companies to help them get past pollution standards. The Rick Santorum ad demonstrates how easy it is to create a metaphor that has a rhetorical effect by manipulating words and antics as seen in the media advertisement. The significance of this structural metaphor is that it can be used as food for thought rather than action or metaphor we live by (Lakoff & Johnson).

Furthermore, the structural metaphor is also used to lay the groundwork for voters to remember and live by when deciding who to vote for, regardless of whether or not they know the politician personally. The significance of a rhetorical metaphor is its power of persuasion, which is implied without the need to build a foundation of words. For example, something can simply be said without reference or meaning, which allows a person or a group of people to focus on one aspect of a media campaign and create a positive or negative outcome for someone's character or media campaign in this case. In speech, idioms have an indicator meaning. In actuality, language is an example of a symbol pattern. This is because words are symbols that need to be interpreted. Most languages have no symbolic or representative relationship with the concept or symbolic meaning that is intended. Thus, the meaning indirectly expresses a sign that connects or provides clues to things in nature. Signs allow the possibility for meaning and knowledge to be expressed, interpreted, and developed. However, the same specified symbol can have a variety of meanings within the culture and has the tendency to be misinterpreted and misunderstood, provided that recipients belong to a different culture or sign language community. **Badawi (2014)** argues that the interpretation of symbols depends on us. Our society always sees and hears cultural experiences through the filters of those who are in the community, but the question that must be asked is, "*Can the same sign language have many different meanings, which is often semantic in culture?*" (David 2014).

3.3 Features of Metaphors in Media

Many linguists have analyzed the politicians' rhetoric and the oral devices that they apply to increase their political idealism and accomplish certain objectives for the masses (David, 2014). Media metaphor, as it is described by Badawi (2014), attracts and holds the audience's attention and is much more influential in successful politicians to integrate these aspects to fulfill their goals. There are important issues that can assist in the persuasion of a certain ideology of production. Some of the salient features of media metaphor in English are pronouns, intersex, repetitions, and style descriptions

(Badawi, 2014). For Arabic, it can be stated that the nature of Arabic metaphors is not different from the nature of metaphors in other languages. Arab politicians frequently resort to linguistic devices to draw people's attention to their speech, and these are among the most famous qualities of the metaphorical form applied to the rhetoric in the Arabic media (Chilton, 2004). The characteristics that Arabic metaphors possess exist in different languages as well. When it comes to Arabic, politicians often use linguistic features to attract attention and to their speech. There are well-known attributes of metaphorical expressions used in Arabic media rhetoric (Chilton, 2004). The language of the media constantly reveals the many levels of power at play, and it can influence policies and political decisions in identifying the dominant value of time and winning votes. The language used in media can also be used in favor of war and defining the needs of its users at any time. Therefore, it has a reputation for being flexible, ambiguous, or dangerous (Goshgarian, 2011). The idea that politics is associated with language underpins the works of many researchers in their study of language used in the media (Claeys, 2013). Hence, many scholars believe that media language is a language of influence (Lasswell, 1949) and a language of power (Van Dijk, 2006). An extensive study of metaphorical media is considered a complex human activity and thus became the basis for the development of the metaphorical media field (Schaffner & Chilton, 2002). Scholars continue to emphasize the importance of studying media languages along with other important factors that influence them, such as culture and audiences. Others claim that it has to do with whatever the public has to say about the media space. Feldman and Landseer (1998) argued that the most common term for media communication is the term "media". They defined it as ways the newspapers, television, and radio channels, parliamentary debates, election speeches, and other political platforms use language as a form of public communication.

The language used in metaphorical media is mostly intended to elicit a general response, with the tendency to confer power (Landtsheer, 1998). There are two perceptions of what represents media metaphors (Chilton, 2004). First, the power struggle between those who work to gain and maintain power and those who are against it. Second, "as cooperatives, the practices and institutions people have for resolving conflicts of interest over money affect liberty and the like" (Chilton, 2004). As Schaffner notes, metaphorical media have the same genre and characteristics but can be divided into subgenres. It also has different frameworks of metaphorical means to appeal to the general public and persuade them with specific goals, regardless of how things are arranged in specific ideals.

Pragmatics, semantics, and phonetics are crucial in the analysis of media metaphor due to the nature of their communication (Schaffner, 1996). The importance of this type of analysis is related to the rhetorical nature of metaphorical media. As Klein (1995) pointed out, the classical features of media rhetoric constitute modern media communication, while Sauer (1996) merges the classical features with the addition of modern features. Metaphorical media is a sophisticated, powerful, and ambiguous language due to its rich culture and idealistic elements. Like other disciplines, the media has many terms, jargon, and slogans, and their meanings vary from country to country. Aside from helping to achieve specific media goals, the tendency to use rhetorical language is due to the distinctive characteristic of metaphorical media, which is that it shows the attitudes, beliefs, and values of politicians (Woodward & Denton, 2009). As claimed by David (2014), rhetorical language is often used as a language manipulation approach that politicians use to persuade, which is done by using persuasive language techniques to take certain media actions on people (it is conceptualized by scholars). Therefore, Arabic-speaking politicians and metaphorical media writers use powerful techniques in their speech, such as illusions, metaphors, and repetitions (Atkinson, 2005). One of the types of metaphors used by Arabic-speaking people is colloquial euphemism. For example, they refer to cancer as a "malignant disease" as they avoid the mention of "cancer" (ElShiekh, 2013; Almasaeid, 2016). This is supported by Al-Azzam et al. (2017), who mentioned that Saudis try to describe cancer euphemistically by using terms like "evil" or "malicious" rather than naming it directly. In Jordan, people are used to indirect expressions like "disease" when referring to cancer. However, in the case of COVID-19, it can be claimed that one's religious background has an impact on the euphemisms they use. They might refer to Quranic phrases or religious euphemisms with religious overtones, such as 'سُرْع' (adversity) or ابتلاء (a test from God). Occasionally, the implied pronoun (هو) is used in Arabic instead of openly mentioning COVID-19. However, other euphemistic expressions that can be used are امتحان (trial), عدوى (infection), تحدي (challenge), هم/قلق (concern/concern), الصعبة المرحلة (the difficult step) are rarely brought

up. To speak subtly about COVID-19, people may give a series of euphemistic answers when they are asked about the topic. Therefore, this clarifies the language variation of Arabic speakers in dealing with diseases. The Arabs may adopt this semantic usage to represent a turning point in the COVID-19 outbreak around the world, where a dramatic increase in infections and deaths has been reported. Arabic may resort to dysphemism as it has the potential to be easily understood, literally or contextually. However, the ambiguity of dysphemism must be maintained under certain circumstances to achieve the functions of communication. These offensive expressions could be used because of their figurative language and their specific cultural implications in the Arab community. Some people may use two expressions charged with dysphemism, to know *أفة* (light) and *جائحة* (pandemic), based on the current critical situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world. As the researcher noted, Arabs represent COVID-19 as *الطاعون* (plague) based on the fact that dysphemism is mainly used to characterize a given topic negatively. The use of dysphemism is affected by the people's religious beliefs when they refer to religion-based expressions involving strong language, such as *غضب الله* (Wrath of God), *جنود الله* (soldiers of God), and *تحذير من الله* (a warning from God). Other expressions with disparaging meanings can be rarely attained, such as *الخطر* (the danger) and *كابوس* (nightmare). To conclude, Arabs do, introduced a number of dysphemistic items for downplaying or diminishing COVID-19's detrimental effects on societal communication.

3.4 Speeches in Arabic Translated into English

Metaphors, as per Warren (1992), are a general semantic approach when addressing offensive problems. Reicof and Johnston (1980) stated in their conceptual theory that figurative expressions are useful for emphasizing or concealing; therefore, participants may emphasize the positive or useful side, the unpleasant or taboo side, and the virus, which was concealed or removed. The utilization of media metaphor is also inspired by COVID-19; in times of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, people seek peace of mind, direction, and comfort in the words of media leaders. Therefore, in such cases, the head of state, the president, and the prime minister deliver speeches and press conferences to address the public, interpret the situation, and guide the public's expected actions. Furthermore, politicians are aware of the power of their language, hence, they tend to make speeches with good thinking and accuracy. Politicians commonly rely on figurative language, such as media metaphors, which are permeated by images to increase the persuasiveness of their language. The word plays a central role in the construction of "social and media reality" by drawing a similarity between the source area and the destination area based on the structural similarity of both areas, as often proven (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphors are deliberately used by politicians as they have proven to be very helpful in interpreting people's perceptions of the reality of living (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). With the outbreak of COVID-19, leaders have become concerned about the economic and social impacts of it, and the imposed restrictions to prevent the virus from spreading and killing more people. Thus, there were sustained calls for each country to provide the latest information to the public. Figurative language, such as conceptual metaphor, has been employed in the crises of COVID-19, particularly in the early, peak, and end speeches of the virus in March, April, and May 2020. It is important to know the stage of the first wave and how their speech affected citizens and their behaviour (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Politicians and media leaders around the world are often faced in the face of the danger posed by COVID-19, which is from an authority standpoint to educate the general public about the pandemic and its implications. Therefore, they have to carefully craft TV speeches and press conferences by taking care of the preventive restrictions they impose and how the language is used, especially metaphors, in talking and interpreting the new situations of COVID-19. A contrasting analysis of the speech must be performed to identify similarities and differences in the use of metaphors by politicians at three specific moments in the pandemic process (Nie et al., 2016). Traditionally, metaphors have been studied in literature, rhetoric, and linguistics, as ornaments to beautify texts without compromising the meaning of the texts (Curticapean, 2006), or otherwise in impolite texts. It has been presented as an ornament that adds aesthetic courage (Nie et al., 2016). Aristotle initially defined the object "metaphor" as follows: by analogy, metaphors are formed based on our ability to see dissimilar similarities. Cognitive linguistics has "changed the role of metaphor from art to musical instruments, an important tool for

conceptualization and reality conceptualization” (Gavriely-Nuri, 2009). As a result, the metaphor “creates social reality and directs future behaviour” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It is becoming increasingly clear that metaphors influence and confine one’s perception of the world by constructing it within the framework of previous knowledge (Bougher, 2012). Metaphors are a type of analogy that includes the cognitive transmission of information between fields (Holyoak & Thagard, 1995). As a result, conceptual metaphor is defined as the process of comprehending one notion or another, also as a series of correspondences between the source and destination of conceptual domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Metaphor is useful when:

- i) The source domain conjures a major knowledge structure, and
- ii) The source domain evokes a notable knowledge structure or emotion, which speakers of the language are well aware of.

However, the comparison of the target and source domains is culturally acceptable (Boroditsky, 2000; Bowdle & Gentner, 2005). In contrast, metaphor is when the source region does not cause a pronounced structure or emotion, when the knowledge of the structure of the source region or its emotional meaning is limited.

3.5 COVID-19 and Metaphor Use

A nagging question that ought to be addressed is: What impact has COVID-19 had on how people see, think about, and act in the world? In other words, how much of a case can be made for the reversibility of target and source domains in COVID-19 metaphors? COVID-19 has given rise to new vocabularies, such as WFH (working from home), social distancing, self-isolation and self-quarantine, lockdown, compared to previous pandemics. The famous video conferencing platform of the same name has given the verb ‘to zoom’ a new meaning. As Guardian columnist and language enthusiast, Steven Poole pointed out, people with serious underlying health conditions, such as pulmonary or cardiac dysfunction or already-compromised immune systems, were initially advised to shield. The use of the transitive verb by modern secular usually requires a shielder (God) and a shielded (a faithful person). In visual arts, there has been an increase in the use of metonyms related to COVID-19 and vaccine that have become symbols, such as small glass vaccine vials, syringes, homes, ventilators, personal protective equipment (PPE), surgical masks, gloves, gowns, visors or goggles, alcohol wipes, and hand sanitizer bottles.

4. Research Method

4.1 Data Collection

The data were collected from three dominant newspapers in Libya from their websites, including Al Wasat Gate, Alshargholawsat, and 218. Three articles were included, one from each of the websites. The researchers chose these three newspapers because they are followed by most citizens, indicating that they are popular in the Libyan community. The data collection process passed through three levels. First, the researcher collected the newspapers articles from the websites. Then, the newspapers articles were translated from the source language, which is Arabic language to English. Finally, the metaphor analysis was carried out.

4.2 Data Analysis

Metaphor analysis is a qualitative research technique that enables researchers to look at the conceptual metaphors (CMs) evoked by metaphoric linguistic expressions (MLEs) made by speakers to gain some comprehension of their cognitive processes and understandings of a particular issue (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). By finding and analysing the metaphors present in a text, metaphor analysis aims to help readers understand the content. In most descriptions of metaphor analysis, the researchers employ their intuition to spot the metaphors (Pitcher & Akerlind, 2019). A systematic metaphor analysis procedure was followed to ensure coherence. Before the first procedure started, the three selected articles from the newspapers mentioned above were translated and the translation was evaluated by an

English rater. In the second stage, metaphors in the selected articles were identified. The ambiguous metaphors were interpreted by two Arabic linguists to ensure that the interpretations were accurate. Their role was to ease the process of interpreting messages, both socially and culturally. Finally, the metaphors were elaborated, in terms of concept, meaning, and the domain used, e.g., war, airplane, wild animals, etc.

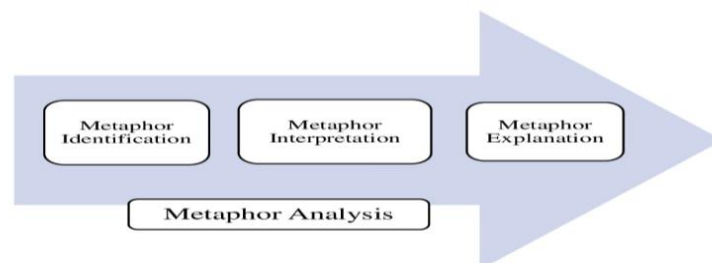


Figure 1. Data Analysis Procedures

4.3 Research Procedure

Three articles from three famous newspapers in Libya were selected. These articles were written in Arabic since it is the mother tongue of the citizens there in Libya. Next, there was a meeting to discuss the research procedure with the supervisor and an Arabic-English rater which was suggested by the supervisor. Besides translating the texts into the English language, Arabic literature about metaphor types and examples in Arabic were also reviewed. After that, the metaphors used in the three texts were identified. Additionally, the real meaning behind these concepts were interpreted, and the metaphor domain expressed in the chosen reports were explained.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. To What Extent Does Each Newspaper Use Metaphors?

As seen in Table (1), Alshargholawsat has the highest metaphor density score of 3.91%, indicating that it used the greatest number of metaphors per word. The second highest metaphor density score was found in 218 scoring 0.49% metaphors per word. Finally, Al Wasat Gate obtained the lowest metaphor density score, which is 0.48%.

Table 1. List of Newspapers with Metaphors Density Score

No.	Newspaper name	Number of words	Number of metaphors	Metaphor density score (metaphors divided by words multiplied by 100)
1	Al Wasat Gate	820	4	0.48%
2	Alshargholawsat	179	7	3.91%
3	218	810	4	0.49%

5.2 Variety of Metaphors across Newspapers

As seen in Tables (2&.3 &4), the metaphorical domain of war was mostly used by the Alshargholawsat, followed by 218 and Al Wasat Gate.

Table 2. Article 1 from Al Wasat Gate

Arabic	Translation	Domain	Metaphor mapping
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يحظر على مقدم الخدمة الطبية أن يمارس التمييز على المريض من خلال لومه على التقصير أو الإهمال في نشر العدوى أو من خلال نعته بالفاظ تمييزية جهوية أو قبلية أو دينية أو غير ذلك من أوجه التمييز المجحف في مكافحة هذا الفيروس، وإلا وجبت مساءلته القانونية.	The medical service provider is prohibited from bullying the patient by blaming him for negligence in spreading the infection or by using regional, tribal or religious discriminatory terms or any other unfair discrimination in combating this virus, otherwise, he must be held legally accountable.	War	In these portrayals, patients are stuck between the virus and corruption in the health system; in this conflict, physicians and nurses lack the required “armament”, which is medical equipment and supplies. He also explains in these terms that the patient is like a criminal because it transmits the enemy, referring to COVID-19, to others.
المريض: بين مطرقة الفساد وسندان (كورونا)	The patient: between the hammer of corruption and the anvil (Corona).	Blacksmithing	
حقوق المرضى التي انتهكت في زمن فيروس (كورونا) بسبب فيروس الفساد في القطاع الصحي.	Patients’ rights, which were violated at the time of the Coronavirus due to the corruption virus in the health sector.	Corruption	
إخلاء سبيله بعد التأكد من سلامته!!! وقد قيل مزاحاً: “العاطس برئ إلى أن تثبت برئ!! كورنته”	He is free to go, after making sure he is not infected. It was said jokingly: “A sneeze is innocent until his corona is proven!!”.	A crime	The patient puts him in the category of the criminal

Table 3. Article 2 from Alshargholawsat

Arabic	Translation	Domain	Mapping
الجيش الأبيض في ليبيا يخوض معركة كورونا “دون أسلحة”	The White Army in Libya is fighting the Corona battle “without weapons.”	War	In all of these extracts, COVID-19 is portrayed as a war, in which doctors and nurses are portrayed as soldiers whereas COVID-19 is portrayed as a fierce and merciless enemy. In this war, doctors and nurses lack the necessary weapon, which is medical equipment and supplies.
بينما يزداد فيروس كورونا شراسة في ليبيا بتزايد عدد الإصابات به	While the Coronavirus is expanding in Libya, the number of infections is increasing.	Wild animals	
وتشجع الكثير من الأطباء الليبيين وأعلنوا وقوفهم في الصفوف الأمامية للقتال ضد هذا الوباء	Libyan doctors were encouraged and announced that they were on the front lines to fight against this pandemic.	War	
دخول الكوادر الطبية في هذه المعركة الكبيرة جاء في وقت تعاني فيه البيئة الصحية في ليبيا إهمالاً كبيراً ونقصاً في اللوازم	The entry of medical cadres into this great battle came at a time when the health environment in Libya suffered from huge neglect and a shortage of supplies.	War	
وتزداد اليوم المعركة ضد الوباء	Today, the battle against the epidemic is escalating.	War	

ولن يدخل هذه المعركة سوى من سَخَّرُوا حياتهم من أجل إنقاذ الأرواح	Only those who sacrificed their lives to save lives will enter this battle.	War	
جهود الكوادر الطبية في هذه المرحلة ستكون أكثر من ذي قبل، غير أنه معركتهم ضد هذا الوباء لن تنجح إلا بتوفير كافة المعدات الوقائي	The efforts of the medical staff at this stage will be more difficult than before, but their battle against this epidemic will not succeed unless all the preventive equipment is provided.	War	

Table 4. Article 3 from 218

Arabic	Translation	Domain	Mapping
فيروس كورونا في ليبيا. "صندوق أسود" لم يُفتح بعد	Coronavirus in Libya... a "black box" has not yet been opened.	Aviation	
الموقف الذي تعيشه ليبيا بسبب الوباء، الذي أصبح أكثر "توحشًا"، يُنذر بكارثة "خطيرة" على كل المناطق، بعد توسع الفيروس فيها	The current situation in Libya, due to the pandemic, which has become like a monster, warns of a catastrophe in all areas, after the expansion of the virus.	Wild animals	
، ومحاولة محاصرة الفيروس، بإمكانات بسيطة ومتواضعة، في دولة نفطية	..., and the attempt to contain the virus, with simple and modest capabilities, in an oil country.	War	
وهل سيتم الكشف عن ملفات فساد لها علاقة مباشرة بالملايين التي صُرفت لمواجهة الوباء ولم تَرى على الأرض النور مطلقًا في ليبيا؟	Will corruption files related to the millions that were spent to confront the pandemic be exposed?	Corruption	

5.3 Analysis of Articles

5.3.1 Article 1 from Al Wasat Gate

i. Sentence

المريض: بين مطرقة الفساد وسندان (كورونا)

Translation: The patient: between the hammer of corruption and the anvil (Corona)

Based on observation, the first sentence revealed that the writer in this article uses the profession of blacksmith as a domain by using vocabulary such as hammer and anvil, which is unrelated to disease and corruption. However, in this case, the writer was using metaphor to describe the patient who is between the hammer of corruption and the anvil of the virus, and here he depicts the patient's suffering between the COVID-19 and the hammer of corruption. And the depravity brought on by war, both of which encircle the sick on all sides.

ii. Sentence

حقوق المرضى التي انتهكت في زمن فيروس (كورونا) بسبب فيروس الفساد في القطاع الصحي.

Translation: Patients' rights which were violated at the time of the Coronavirus due to the corruption virus in the health sector.

The writer utilised the metaphor of the term "virus" with corruption in the second phase of this article, describing it as a corruption in the health sector as it destroys the human body. The implication of this word, however, is that the healthcare system has been portrayed as a corrupt system.

iii. Sentence

!!"إخلاء سبيله بعد التأكد من سلامته
!!"وقد قيل مزاحاً: "العاطس بريء إلى أن تثبت كورنته

Translation: He is free to go, after making sure he is not infected.

It was said jokingly: "A sneeze is innocent until his corona is proven!!"

In the third sentence of this article, the writer described the patient as a culprit or a criminal, by making a description related to crimes, prisons, and criminals to the patient. He analogized a sneezing person to an innocent person until it became clear that he had no disease, and this came after conducting a medical analysis.

5.3.2 Article 2 from Alshargholawsat

i. Sentence

الجيش الأبيض في ليبيا يخوض معركة كورونا "دون أسلحة

Translation: The White Army in Libya is fighting the Corona battle "without weapons"

In the title of this article, the author characterizes the medical team as an army without weapons against COVID-19. Despite the paucity of medical equipment and safety, the physicians acted like an army against this infection.

ii. Sentence

بينما يزداد فيروس كورونا شراسة في ليبيا بتزايد عدد الإصابات به

Translation: While the Coronavirus is getting fiercer in Libya, the number of infections is increasing.

In this sentence of the second article, we find that COVID-19 has been compared to predators that are characterized by ferocity and fighting. The description of COVID-19 infected with infections and this field used in wildlife and targeted are the people infected with COVID-19.

iii. Sentence

وتشجع الكثير من الأطباء الليبيين وأعلنوا وقوفهم في الصفوف الأمامية للقتال ضد هذا الوباء

Translation: Libyan doctors were encouraged and announced that they were on the front lines to fight against this pandemic.

The writer's statement is a description of fighting on the front lines, and this parallel is utilized in battles, although what is intended here is physicians and the virus. Doctors view themselves as at war considering that they are on the front lines of the struggle against COVID-19.

iv. Sentence

دخول الكوادر الطبية في هذه المعركة الكبيرة جاء في وقت تعاني فيه البيئة الصحية في ليبيا إهمالاً كبيراً ونقصاً في اللوازم

Translation: The entry of medical cadres into this great battle came at a time when the health environment in Libya suffers from great neglect and a shortage of supplies.

In this article, it was discovered that there is recurring analogy that formed a pattern, which is describing the battle between doctors and disease as if they were in a state of war.

v. Sentence

وتزداد اليوم المعركة ضد الوباء

Translation: Today, the battle against the pandemic is escalating

The writer used the word ‘battle’ in this phrase, but the battle involved the doctors themselves, rather than armies. The metaphor used indicated that doctors see themselves as the armies fighting against COVID-19, as the writer describes them.

vi. Sentence

ولن يدخل هذه المعركة سوى من سَخَرُوا حياتهم من أجل إنقاذ الأرواح

Translation: Only those who sacrificed their lives to save lives will enter this battle.

The author highlighted the predicament of doctors and their battle against COVID-19. The physicians are the first to engage in this conflict, but how can they commit when the adversary is swift and dangerous and they lack medical equipment? However, the physicians manage to perform their medical duties without delay despite them placing their own lives in danger.

vii. Sentence

جهود الكوادر الطبية في هذه المرحلة ستكون أكثر من ذي قبل، غير أنه معركتهم ضد هذا الوباء لن تتجح إلا بتوفير كافة المعدات الوقائي

Translation: The efforts of the medical staff at this stage will be more than before, but their battle against this epidemic will not succeed unless all the preventive equipment is provided. The writer still uses metaphors that describe wars and the suffering of medical staff in this article. This suggests that war is a common metaphorical domain in reporting COVID-19 updates.

5.3.3 Article 3 from 218

i. Sentence

فيروس كورونا في ليبيا.. “صندوق أسود” لم يُفتح بعد

Translation: Coronavirus in Libya... a “black box” has not yet been opened

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines black box as a small, complicated machine that is used to record information of an aircraft during its flight. It functions as a device to monitor the performance of the vehicle and ultimately determine the cause of any accident. In addition to that, the internal mechanism of a black box is usually mysterious and hidden. In this article, the writer equated viruses and diseases with unopened black boxes. This is due to the reason that the extent of COVID-19, particularly in Libya, was unknown. Therefore, the idea of this comparison is that like a black box, COVID-19 was mysterious.

ii. Sentence

الموقف الذي تعيشه ليبيا بسبب الوباء، الذي أصبح أكثر “توحشاً”، يُنذر بكارثة “خطيرة” على كل المناطق، بعد توسع الفيروس فيها.

Translation: In Libya, due to the epidemic, the situation has become more “savage,” foreshadowing a “serious” catastrophe in all regions due to the virus spread.

In this sentence, the writer wanted to describe the virus and disease in Libya with its brutality and its rapid spread. The description of the savage is usually used for animals that live in the wild, but in this context, he described COVID-19 as a brutality that created a crisis or disaster that will befall the country.

iii. Sentence

ومحاولة محاصرة الفيروس، بإمكانيات بسيطة ومتواضعة، في دولة نفطية

Translation: ..., and the attempt to contain the virus, with simple and modest capabilities, in an oil country. It looks like a virus and disease has become more brutal and savage is usually used to describe the beast describing wildlife and this is a description used to describe the disease.

iv. Sentence

وهل سيتم الكشف عن ملفات فساد لها علاقة مباشرة بالملايين التي صُرفت لمواجهة الوباء ولم ترى على الأرض النور مطلقاً في ليبيا؟

Translation: Will corruption files related to the millions that were spent to confront the pandemic be exposed?

Based on the excerpt, it is possible to conclude that COVID-19 had besieged corruptions. This description is used in wars such as siege, besiegement, and tightening the noose. In the eleventh sentence, it describes the relationship between corruption and COVID-19 because it is a relationship and an analogy of complete darkness in which there is no light.

Table 5. Metaphorical Domains Found in the Articles and the Frequency

No.	Metaphorical Domain	Frequency
1	War	8
2	Lifetime	1
3	Wild animals	2
4	Aviation	1
5	Blacksmithing	1
6	Corruption	2
7	Total	15

Based on the observation, the frequency of each of the metaphorical domains differ from each other. Thus, the metaphor of War is the highest used metaphor among the others. This can be attributed to the mentality of the people, especially in the Middle East and Africa. The second mostly used domain is the metaphor of Corruption. This is also an important metaphor due to the reason that the people in Libya relate the failure of the government to the corruption. The metaphorical domain of Wild Animal was the third highest whereas the metaphorical domains Aviation, Blacksmith and Lifetime has the same frequency of one.

Table 6. Metaphorical Domain Containing a Positive or Negative Meaning

Metaphorical Domain	Positive	Negative
War	/	Yes
Lifetime	/	Yes
Wild animals	/	Yes
Aviation	/	Yes
Blacksmithing	/	Yes
Corruption	/	Yes

5.4 Discussions

5.4.1 The Most Frequent Metaphor

As seen in the above findings, the most common metaphor domain was War. In the context of war, there is an enemy, a strategy as well as warriors. In some cases, there are even traitors and deserters. Hence, COVID-19 has been identified as an enemy and the practice of social distancing has been made a strategy to combat the enemy. When the various levels of enemy are coupled with social distancing, the feelings of animosity are triggered which ultimately sow the seeds of polarization. On the other hand, frontliners including health-care staff and the public are seen as warriors whereas rule-breakers are seen as traitors and deserters. Dichotomies caused by the COVID-19 war include the World Health Organization versus countries and peoples of the world. The war symbolism is convincing. This is because aside from COVID-19 being seen as the enemy, flattening the curve and saving the economy are considered as strategies to combat the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, health-care workers are seen as front-line fighters whereas people who abide by the law by isolating themselves are the home front. In contrast, the traitors and deserters are those people who break the rules of social isolation are also mentioned. It also stresses the urgency of drastic political decisions, such as closing schools, imposing travel bans, and stalling economies around the world. It appeals to citizens' sense of duty to serve their country in its hour of need. This is certainly not the first time that leaders and policymakers have used the war metaphor to describe a threat that cannot be classified as military. Consider the war on poverty, on cancer, on illegal immigration, not to mention the war on drugs or crime.

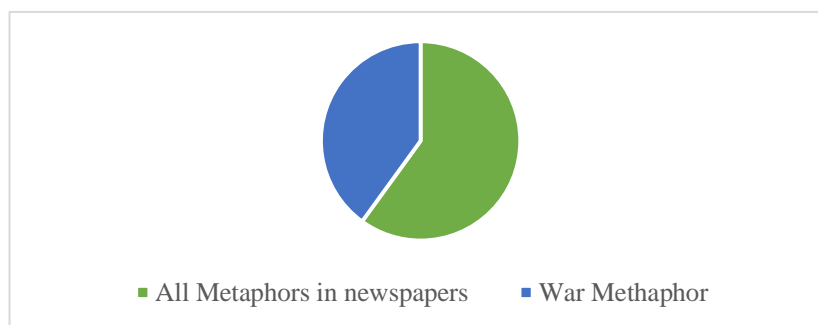


Figure 2. Frequency of War Metaphors

Although war metaphors appeal more as a tool of political rhetoric, it has some pitfalls that are particularly dangerous in the case of COVID-19. Considering the critical analysis of the metaphor approach that was adopted in the study, the selection of conflict metaphors is usually based on conceptual considerations, such as seeing life as a struggle to survive and that society is a person. The main conceptual keys that shape the war metaphors during COVID-19 include the following: Life is a struggle for survival, society is a person, and epidemics and diseases are enemies. As for conceptual metaphors, the researcher found several war metaphors. They can be summarized in the following metaphors.

- The following examples contain typical expressions used by the Libyan media to describe COVID-19 and its aspects through the metaphors of fighting and battle by perceiving pandemic as a war.
- Examples of the war metaphors are: the White Army fighting, the Corona battle, "without weapons", in the front line to fight, great battle, the fight against the epidemic, sacrificed their lives.

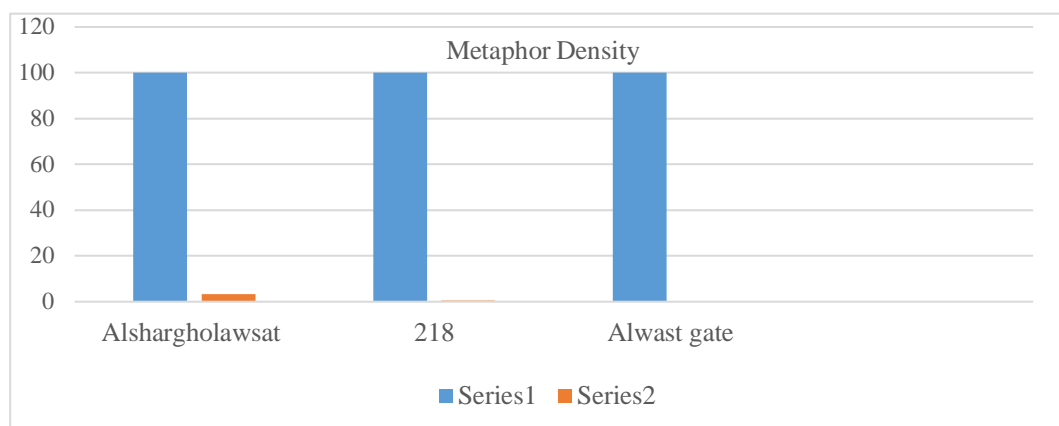


Figure 3. Frequency of Metaphor Domains in the Selected Articles

The frequent use of metaphors as seen in the articles is somehow similar to each other, with slight differences. For Series 1, the density of the metaphor is the same in the three newspapers. However, for the next series, Series 2, the density is different between the three newspapers. As displayed in Figure (3), the density of metaphor in Alshargholawsat newspaper is heavier and more than the other two newspapers.

5.4.2 Virus is Enemy and a Monster

COVID-19 is seen as an enemy due to its capability of deceiving and causing wounds and suffering. It is worth noting that the virus "strikes a blow", especially in news discourse. This can be explained by the fact that intimidation is a traditional metaphor for this type of discourse. The metaphor of the enemy goes hand in hand with the analogy of the virus as a monster. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two because a similar set of related words in both forms were used. For example, the verb "fight" has the possibility to refer to fighting the monster and those who "win" the "battle" with the enemy or monster can be called "heroes". Hence the difficulty in distinguishing between enemy and monster. However, the image of a beast usually has ascribed threatening features which is charged with extremely negative connotations with the help of lexicons describing its appearance and behaviors.

5.4.3 People are Participants in the Struggle

Individuals as well as groups of people, countries, and all of humanity appear as participants in battles, as a result of which they can become victims, losers, or winners. This indicates that not only medical personnels are allowed to be heroes in the fight against COVID-19, but also citizens who follow the rules to help fight COVID-19 by practicing good standards of hygiene by using masks and social distancing. Thus, the war metaphor has the potential to inspire the population to join forces in the fight against the enemy, which is COVID-19.

5.4.4 COVID-19 as a Natural Disaster

The epidemiological model of a pandemic as a natural disaster, which is represented in the COVID-19 discourse has fewer examples, which may be due to the lower potential of this model compared to the war model.

5.4.5 Pandemic Check

Finally, the metaphorical paradigm of "Pandemic Check" occupies an important segment in media coverage. Metaphorically, the person is assigned the role of a student who has to pass a difficult and

important exam. However, this metaphorical form seems to be used more by columnists and politicians, rather than by news reporters. In addition to the metaphor of the natural disaster, this also seems to help strengthen people's religious unity.

6. Conclusion

Conceptual metaphors are based on the existing stereotypes that has the highest possibility to influence the recipients. The choice of a particular metaphor is influenced by a set of specific conditions and context of use. Using a metaphor, the most important speaker, in his/her opinion, identifies the characteristics of the object, interprets them, and forms an image of COVID-19 in the recipients' mind. Despite criticism by some scholars, the military metaphor remains more common in describing COVID-19 in many languages, including Arabic. Although the objectives of the study did not include the differentiation of figurative paradigms by types of media discourse, there are still some regularities observed. Thus, making the war metaphor relevant for news articles, particularly the headlines and guidelines. Due to their expressiveness, they are able to help attracts the attention of the recipients and ultimately create a certain attitude to the problem. The dominance of the military metaphor can generally be explained by the more extensive structure of this metaphorical model, as well as its greater pragmatic potential.

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