

## COVID-19 Conceptual Metaphors in Jordanian Political Discourse: Evidence from a Newspaper-based Corpus

Hanan Hasan EL-Kanash <sup>a</sup>  
[hkanash29@gmail.com](mailto:hkanash29@gmail.com)  
The University of Jordan, Jordan

Jihad M. Hamdan  
[j.hamdan@ju.edu.jo](mailto:j.hamdan@ju.edu.jo)  
The University of Jordan, Jordan

### ABSTRACT

Conceptual Metaphors are part of human cognition and are essential to human knowledge and experience. The study reported here examines the COVID-19 conceptual metaphors underlying the metaphoric language employed by Jordanian government officials during two periods in 2020, namely from February to May and September to December. To this end, a corpus of official statements (n=213) reported in *Al-Rai 'The Opinion'*, an Arabic daily mainstream newspaper, was collected and analyzed using the Cognitive Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). Identified conceptual metaphors are categorized under the following eight source domains: WARFARE, CONTAINER, OCEAN, JOURNEY, NATURAL PHENOMENON, EXAMINATION, ANIMAL, and SPORT. A comparison of the frequency of these metaphors in each period is established. The analysis reveals that WARFARE and CONTAINER metaphors have the highest frequency in both periods followed by OCEAN and JOURNEY. The percentage of the other four domains is less than five percent. Conceptual metaphors subsumed under the frequent domains, namely, WARFARE, CONTAINER, OCEAN, and JOURNEY are further examined and discussed following Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2004). The results show that during the first period, the priority given by the Jordanian government was to focus on convincing people of the restrictive measures which suspended freedom. Therefore, WARFARE has dominated the scene. However, as the crisis progressed, the CONTAINER metaphors took over. This study may assist government agencies to use the right metaphors to impact the public opinion and win the masses to their stands.

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphor; COVID-19; Critical Metaphor Analysis; Jordan; political discourse

### INTRODUCTION

Two years after the unexpected global outbreak of COVID-19, it is unsurprising that the pandemic has become embedded in the discourse of different domains such as politics and health, impacting the formal and informal use of figures of speech, particularly metaphors.

Musu (2020) states that different politicians and news media have adopted WAR metaphors to describe the challenges the world encounters as COVID-19 sweeps across the globe, despite the different views on WAR metaphors in discourse (cf. Flusberg, Matlock & Thibodeau, 2018). Semino (2021) advocates for reframing WAR metaphors in favor of FIRE metaphors as they

---

<sup>a</sup> Corresponding author

offer a more versatile and appropriate way of communicating different aspects of the pandemic. Meaning does not only reside in the linguistic items but also in the language users' conceptualizations of the situations and events (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). Metaphor is a means of conceptualization. As metaphors may be created by those in power such as the media and religious and political leaders (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003), and because of the subtle influence of language over thought, the authors of the article find it essential to examine the different conceptual metaphors used in the communicating issues on COVID-19 in the Jordanian setting.

In this context, several studies have contrasted conceptual metaphors related to coronavirus in state leaders' speeches (e.g., Crespo-Fernández, 2021; Neshkovska & Trajkova, 2021). Other studies have discussed metaphors as a persuasive strategy used by government officials, for example, Alkhawaldeh (2021) in Jordan. To the best of our knowledge, not so many studies have examined COVID-19 conceptual metaphors employed by government officials using data elicited from newspapers. This research is meant to contribute to filling this gap by focusing on the context of Jordan, a country in the Middle East with Arabic as its official and native language. While Alkhawaldeh (2021) examines metaphor elicited from interviews with government officials on TV and radio, the study at hand is different in its scope as it investigates conceptual metaphor elicited from newspapers. Newspaper data have been a rich source for metaphorical analysis. Crespo-Fernández (2018), for example, has studied the communicative functions of metaphorical and non-metaphorical euphemisms in local, county, and state political discourse using data from US newspapers. The study highlighted the persuasive power of euphemistic metaphors and the role they play as a framing device which is used to target controversial issues.

In view of this, the current study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the COVID-19 conceptual metaphors underlying the metaphoric language employed by the Jordanian government officials in newspapers in two periods of the pandemic in 2020?
2. Are there any differences in the use of conceptual metaphors between the two identified periods? If yes, what are they?
3. What are the pragmatic and communicative functions that these metaphors convey?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Metaphors abound in coronavirus-related communications. Gillis (2020) investigated WAR and BATTLE metaphors in some of the governments' legislative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her analysis included Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, British, French, and Israeli legislatures. She identified four metaphorical clusters: being at war; the enemy; the soldiers, and the home-front of the public. She pointed out that WAR metaphors were being deliberately used by authorities during the COVID-19 crisis. She cautioned against the abundant use of MILITARY metaphors in COVID-19 context even though they "are effective and possibly even necessary to quickly mobilize a widespread social response to the virus" (Gillis, 2020, p.159). Neshkovska and Trajkova (2021) reported a clear predominance of MILITARY and WAR metaphor in their contrastive analysis of speeches of four key state leaders – Boris Johnson, Donald Trump, Angela Merkel, and Emanuel Macron following Lakoff and Johnson (2003). These metaphors covered three main subdomains: CORONA AS AN ENEMY, THE STATE LEADER IS LEADING THE NATION IN THIS WAR, and THE CIVIL SERVANTS AND HEALTH WORKERS ARE ON THE FRONT LINE. JOURNEY, OCEAN and

TEACHER metaphors were also reported. The differences they found concerning the frequency and type of metaphors were related to the time of speeches and were attributed to the seriousness of COVID-19 situation in each country. The study highlighted the pragmatic functions the leaders intended to achieve through these metaphors: conveying or mitigating the threat they felt from the pandemic and giving hope to their people that everything is under control.

In his critical metaphor analysis of the official declarations of the British and Spanish Prime Ministers, Boris Johnson and Pedro Sánchez respectively, Crespo-Fernández (2021) contrasted conceptual metaphors and examined their affective and persuasive effects. The findings revealed that WARFARE metaphors were dominant with other metaphors in use being PERSON, JOURNEY, HERO and NATURAL DISASTER. He concluded that the identified metaphors served a three-fold purpose: “first, to instill courage in the population; second, to warn citizens about the danger of the pandemic; and third, to justify the measures taken by the government and thus avoid criticism from public opinion as part of a strategy of positive self-presentation” (p.31). These conclusions resonated with Neshkovska and Trajkova (2021) findings on the pragmatic functions of the identified metaphors. Crespo-Fernández (2021) argued that the identified metaphors in the domains of PERSON (A STATE IS A PERSON) and JOURNEY (RECOVERY IS A JOURNEY) have positive connotations and so their affective value is to boost morale in difficult times. Metaphors from the domains of WAR (VIRUS IS AN ENEMY) and NATURAL DISASTER (VIRUS IS A TIDE) have a negative affective impact as they suggest that people are at the mercy of human opponents or natural forces. They serve to warn the citizens about the danger of infection. Thus, their function is to persuade citizens into abiding by the law and staying at home.

Reporting on the use of WAR metaphors as a persuasive strategy by government officials in Jordan, Alkhawaldeh (2021) found that these metaphors were extensively used in pandemic policy communications to the public. He pinpointed that the use of war-related expressions and the MILITARY metaphor during government officials’ interviews is to prompt the public to accept and trust the government’s policy to confront the virus and control its spread. While Alkhawaldeh (2021) focused on metaphors related to the source domain of WAR as a persuasive strategy, the current study explores metaphors related to different source domains. It also discusses different pragmatic and communicative functions of metaphors; thus, it provides a more comprehensive overview of COVID-19 metaphors used by government officials in Jordan. In the same context, but using a different approach, Younis and Altakhaineh (2022) studied metaphors and metonymies depicting COVID-19 in memes on Jordanian Social Media Websites with a view to understanding how culture affects the sources domains used to depict COVID-19. They reported a number of source domains such as FOOD and ANIMAL and culturally specific metaphors, namely; LENTIL SOUP IS A CORONA VACCINE and CORONA IS A HYENA.

Focusing on metaphor range and frequency, Sanderson and Meade (2020) examined a selection of the most-read articles in news media outlets in the UK - the BBC; Sky News; the Guardian and the Daily Mail - during the third week of March 2020. They reported two mostly used metaphors: WAR which frames people as soldiers, and CRIME which frames the general public as criminals. They argued that these metaphors were unhelpful in the pandemic context because people, including health workers, were not really soldiers defending their country. They further argued that health workers deserve safe conditions to work and “the government’s main role in this situation is not to fight a war, or to manage criminal activity. Its role is to foster trust, manage services and support systems responsibly” (Sanderson & Meade, 2020, 1). In contrast, Almuraiti (2020) pointed out a low prevalence of WAR metaphors in Australian COVID-19 news reports and a high prevalence of COVID IS A TSUNAMI one, perhaps because of the predominance of tsunamis

in the Asian region. However, the researcher has not offered any explanation for the low/high prevalence of what she reported.

In a comprehensive study of coronavirus metaphors collected from the United Kingdom's national press, Charteris-Black (2021) examines a wide range of metaphor frames including WAR, FIRE, FORCE OF NATURE, CONFINEMENT and CONTAINER. He reports that the lexicon related to WAR and FIRE increases during the months that mark a specific wave and declines in other months. He also investigates whether metaphors in the frames of WAR, FIRE and FORCE OF NATURE have an impact on reasoning. He concludes that metaphor may have had an unconscious influence on respondents' beliefs and so "metaphor may have made it more likely that people would support a policy of complete quarantine" (Charteris-Black, 2021, p. 51). While discussing CONTAINER metaphors, Charteris-Black (2021) demonstrates how the mouth has been perceived as a container of the disease at the personal level. Thus, wearing a mask became the basic level of control and protection from infection. At the social level, the disease penetration of a container implies a threat. Those outside the container are 'them' entering the container of 'us' as we are inside. Thus, the lockdown implies a container supporting protection and control.

The present study contributes to this growing body of research on political statements in COVID-19 crisis situations by providing Arabic-based evidence extracted from news in Jordan. It identifies and analyzes conceptual metaphors in two identified periods in 2020 as we will see in the course of the article.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is couched in cognitive linguistics approaches to metaphor, particularly, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which initiated a paradigm shift in metaphor research. They indicate that metaphor structures our language, our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. A metaphor is defined as a cognitive mechanism by which "one experiential domain is partially 'mapped', i.e., projected, onto a different experiential domain, enabling in this way the second domain to be partially comprehended in terms of the first one" (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203). CMT has been developed by Lakoff and colleagues (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez-Hernández, 2011 for the development of the theory).

In CMT, conceptual metaphors are viewed as a process of understanding one concept or domain of experience in terms of another, that is, as a set of correspondences between two conceptual domains, which are known as source and target domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). These correspondences are conceptual and systematic. For example, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is derived from different linguistic expressions. In "I've never won an argument with him", for example, speakers describe an argument as war that may have a winning or losing outcome. The people arguing are seen as adversaries and so one could attack the other's argument as in "He attacked every weak point in my argument". The conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR reflects "what we do and how we perceive what we are doing while arguing" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p. 5). The sets of correspondences are called "mappings" between source and target domains. The mapping knowledge from the domain of WAR onto the domain of ARGUMENT allows us to reason about one in terms of the other (Lakoff 1993, p. 207). Kövecses (2010) maintains that a source domain contributes predetermined conceptual materials to a range of target domains. These concepts are agreed on by the speakers of a community. Kövecses (2015) affirms that in conceptual metaphor, a mapping connects the source domain frame with the target domain frame and thus, metaphor is a set of correspondences between the elements of two mental frames. Further, Kövecses (2021) posits that in some conceptual metaphors "it is not the elements

constituting a source domain that get mapped from source to target, but the knowledge we have about them” (p.194). This view emphasizes the role of context in metaphorical communication.

Due to the limitations of CMT with regard to the pragmatic function of metaphor, particularly in political discourse, further advances were introduced to integrate CMT with Critical Discourse Analysis. This resulted in creating a new perspective of metaphor analysis called Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) which was introduced by Charteris-Black (2004, 2006, 2011). CMA “relies on a set of linguistic concepts that allow us to identify how language exerts a subtle influence over thought and opinion, and which eventually creates myths and ideologies” (Charteris-Black, 2019, pp.15-16). The starting point of CMA is identifying conceptual metaphors through a set of metaphorical linguistic expressions (henceforth MLEs), then moving to the interpretation and explanation of the meaning of each metaphor in terms of the broader social and political context. This is attained from the positive or negative ‘evaluation’ of the metaphor which is basically based on the social and emotional attitudes of the recipient of the metaphor as reflected in the common social and individual sets of beliefs (El-Sharif, 2012). CMA is related to the notion of deliberate metaphors introduced by Steen (2011) as a response to the limitations of CMT to explain metaphor use and functions in discourse.

For the purpose of this study, a combination of these interrelated cognitive linguistic approaches is employed to account for the use of specific metaphors in government official statements in newspapers on COVID-19 in Jordan.

## CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The corpus of this study is comprised of news stories containing statements on COVID-19 made by the Jordanian government officials including prime minister(s), ministers, media spokespersons of ministries, representatives of the National Epidemiological Committee, and government institutions. These news stories were reported in a mainstream daily Arabic newspaper, namely *Al-Rai ‘The Opinion’*. According to the Jordan Media Assessment Report (USAID, 2020), *Al-Rai* is the most read newspaper in Jordan, thus it is selected for its popularity and accessibility. It is an example of “a mainstream media which publish all examples of stories with no obvious religious, ethnic or socioeconomic bias” (Hamdan, 2011, p. 118). Because of this, the term news story is used here to refer to written articles or interviews published in *Al-Rai* in which government officials in Jordan inform the public about COVID-19.

The corpus was collected from the official online newspaper’s website (<https://alrai.com/>). This corpus is particularly important due to the lack of an accessible Arabic corpus on COVID-19. The collection procedure was as follows: First, the search was narrowed down using key words viz. كورونا ‘Corona’, كوفيد ‘COVID’, فيروس ‘virus’ Second, the text of each story was carefully read to ensure the inclusion of news stories on COVID-19 released by Jordanian government officials. To ensure that the identified metaphors were not part of an intrinsic personal style of a certain government official, statements made by different official representatives were included. Following Hamdan (2011), the inclusion criteria are: If 50 per cent or more of the story is direct reporting on COVID-19, it is included; the percentage of direct reporting drops to 33 per cent if the headline includes the name corona or COVID-19. An additional criterion was added to meet the objectives of the study: news stories of government press releases that were exclusively restricted to reporting the infections and death rates were excluded. This was specifically important since these press releases only include statistics on the daily news of the disease in a fixed non-rhetorical format. This process was done manually. The identified sample consisted of 213 news

stories with a total of 848,493 words. The news stories were converted into sets of text files and labeled according to date of publication (e.g., 17 March 2020). They were divided into two subcorpora according to the two periods. The first period covered news stories from February 2020 to May 2020, and the second covered those from September 2020 to December 2020. This was done because differences in statements and rhetoric of government officials might have been influenced by the severity of the pandemic which is likely to change from one period to another, thus differences are expected. An interval of three months was given between the two periods as the government eased its precautionary measures during this interval before it went back to tightening them in late August of the same year. The division into two periods was expected to reveal specific conceptual metaphors used in a certain period. The total number of news stories in the first period (P1) is (n= 77) and in the second period (P2) (n= 136).

To identify metaphors in the corpus, the researchers followed the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007). The basic principle of MIP is to compare the contextual meaning of the lexical unit with its basic meaning in dictionaries. According to Zibin and Hamdan (2019, p. 244) “if a word has a sense which is not basic then it can be identified as a metaphorical expression”. Below is an illustrative example:

علماء دين يحضون على التكاتف والتعاون لمواجهة كورونا.

'Religious scholars urge for solidarity and cooperation to confront Corona.'

(3 April 2020)

Firstly, the text was read more than once to develop a general understanding of it. Secondly, the lexical units were identified using slashes between each one of them as in: /يحضون /دين /علماء /على /كورونا /لمواجهة /التعاون /والتكاتف /على. Thirdly, the contextual meaning of each lexical unit was identified, and a decision was made as to whether it differs from its basic and literal meaning. In addition to the researchers' intuition as native speakers of Arabic, معجم المعاني الجامع (the Comprehensive Dictionary of Meaning) and the Dictionary of COVID-19 Terms (2020) were used to identify the basic meaning of the words in the corpus. In the example above, it appears that the contextual meaning of the word 'كورونا' 'corona' seem to have a non-literal/basic meaning. The meaning of an enemy is inferred from the expression لمواجهة كورونا. Thus, the expression لمواجهة كورونا 'to confront corona' was marked as being metaphorical. Then, cross domain mapping between VIRUS and HUMAN was established. This means that there are implicit similarities between an inanimate entity and an animate one. The metaphor inferred here is CORONA IS AN ENEMY.

Metaphorical expressions were identified in the corpus in two rounds. First, we analyzed P1 sub corpus to identify candidate metaphors. The analysis was done manually as the size of the sample was manageable. The researchers extracted contextualized metaphorical expressions and tabulated them; the researchers then identified the conceptual mapping and categorized the conceptual metaphors. The results of this analysis showed that a number of source domains are used to describe COVID-19 (e.g., WAR, CONTAINER, JOURNEY, WATER, and NATURAL PHENOMENON); they also unveiled the government's measures to combat the spread of the virus. These source domains are similar to those found in the relevant literature (see Almuraiti, 2020; Gillis, 2020; Charteris-Black, 2021; Crespo Fernández, 2021; Neshkovska & Trajkova, 2021). Completing this round of analysis formed the basis for the second round which comprised P2 subcorpus. The researchers followed the same approach adopted in P1 for extracting, tabulating, and categorizing the data. Table 1 shows the total number of words and the number of identified

MLEs in each subcorpus. The metaphors were validated by two Arabic-speaking linguists at the University of Jordan.

TABLE 1. Number of words and metaphorical linguistic expressions in each subcorpus

Period	Total no. of words	Total no. of MLEs
P1 subcorpus	296,262	245
P2 subcorpus	552,231	361
Total	848,493	606

Finally, a table was established to compare the number and the frequency of metaphors in the two periods. This was essential to answer the first and second research questions, namely, 1) identifying the COVID-19 conceptual metaphors underlying the metaphoric language employed by Jordanian government officials in newspapers in two periods in Jordan in 2020; and 2) identifying, analysing, and interpreting the differences, if any. The results are presented and discussed in the following section. The conceptual metaphors that subsume under the most frequent source domains are presented and discussed with their pragmatic and communicative functions, namely, persuasion, gaining solidarity, explaining the threat of the virus, and gaining approval of public opinion. Specific examples from each period are provided and the differences between the two periods are discussed where applicable.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, a total of 606 MLEs were identified and categorized under eight source domains. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentages of these domains in each period.

TABLE 2. Source domains and their frequencies in each period

Source domains	Period 1		Period 2	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
WARFARE	117	49	113	31
CONTAINER	63	26	166	46
OCEAN	20	8	25	7
JOURNEY	18	7	22	6
NATURAL PHENOMENON	10	2	15	4
EXAMINATION	7	3	15	4
ANIMAL	8	3	5	1
SPORT	2	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	245	100	361	100

As shown in Table 2, the most frequent metaphors are WAR and CONTAINER. The frequency of the other metaphors amounts to eight percent. Metaphors that rank above five percent, i.e., those focusing on WARFARE, CONTAINER, JOURNEY and OCEAN are presented and discussed. The other four types are not discussed in detail in this article as they constitute below five percent. Conceptual metaphors that subsume under the frequent four source domains are further discussed

in the following section along with their pragmatic and communicative functions. Illustrative examples are presented in Arabic followed by their respective English translations<sup>b</sup>.

## CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND THEIR PRAGMATIC AND COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

A qualitative analysis of the most frequent source domains is presented in this section. This analysis presents the subtypes of conceptual metaphors and their pragmatic and communicative functions. Below each subtype, two examples are provided; the first is selected from P1 while the second is from P2.

### WARFARE METAPHORS

Below are the five identified conceptual mappings (sub types) which are related to WARFARE with illustrative examples along with their MLEs.

#### CONFRONTING THE VIRUS IS FIGHTING A BATTLE

##### Example 1

فنحن أمام امتحان ومعركة مع عدو شرس لن يُهزَم بغير تعاوننا ومصداقيتنا.

'We are facing a test and a **battle with a fierce enemy that will not be defeated** without our cooperation and credibility.'

(17 March 2020, P1)

In example 1, معركة 'battle' is used metaphorically to convey the meaning of the country's fight against the virus which is described as عدو شرس 'fierce enemy'. The battle is not an easy one since the enemy is شرس 'fierce'. The need for تعاوننا 'our cooperation' without which the virus will not يهزم 'be defeated' gives an indication of the agency of the society to achieve the goal – putting an end to the pandemic. Persuading citizens that the virus is a threat that must be stopped through cooperation is conveyed through this metaphor.

##### Example 2

وأوضح أن الالتزام المجتمعي خلال الأسبوعين السابقين كان عالياً، مؤكداً أن الأردن لا يزال في معركة شرسة مع فيروس كورونا.

'He explained that the societal commitment during the previous two weeks was high, stressing that **Jordan is still in a fierce battle with the coronavirus.**'

(2 December 2020, P2)

In example 2, معركة 'battle' is used metaphorically referring to the continued confrontation with the coronavirus. The use of negative adjectives شرسة 'fierce' with 'battle' implies the seriousness of the situation. This means that the officials continued to present the pandemic as a serious threat to the country. By using such metaphors, they urge citizens to continue complying with restrictive measures particularly in the absence of vaccines.

---

<sup>b</sup> The translations were prepared by the first author and reviewed by the second author, who also happened to be a professional translator.



### CORONA IS AN AGGRESSIVE ENEMY

In example 3, the coronavirus is depicted as an enemy.

#### Example 3

ودعا حداد المواطنين إلى تغليب المصلحة... لما يضمن المحافظة على أرواحهم ويمكن الجهات الرسمية من القيام بدورها في مواجهة وباء كورونا الذي يهدد اليوم العالم، ويخطف الأرواح.

‘Haddad called on citizens to override the public interest...to enable the official authorities to do their role **in confronting the Corona epidemic**, which today **threatens** the world and **reaps** souls.’  
(19 March 2020, P1)

The use of *مواجهة* in example 3 implies having an opponent. This is an example of personification (Charteris-Black, 2004; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) where an inanimate entity (corona) is construed as an animate one, thus, CORONA IS AN ENEMY is depicted. In the same example, personification is evident in the MLEs: *يهدد* ‘threaten’ and *يخطف* ‘reap’. Both of these MLEs have negative connotations which could instill fear of the virus in citizens. Other MLEs have been identified in the corpus leading to the same inference: *محاربة* ‘fighting a war with’, *مقاتلة* ‘having a fight with’, and *مواجهة* ‘having a confrontation with’. It is important to note that both the nation and the government are responsible for fighting the virus.

#### Example 4

من جانبه، قال خبير الوبائيات وزير الصحة الأسبق الدكتور سعد الخرابشة أن سبب عدم توفر المطاعيم الموسمية في هذه المرحلة هو ناتج عن زيادة الطلب عليها في الأونة الأخيرة جراء اجتياح كورونا العالم.

‘The epidemiology expert, former Minister of Health, Dr. Sa’ad Kharabsheh, said that the reason for the lack of seasonal vaccinations at this stage is the result of the increased demand for them recently **due to corona’s invasion of the world.**’

(25 October 2020, P2)

In example 4, *اجتياح* ‘invasion’ is used to describe an action that has already been accomplished by the virus. Accomplishing an action indicates agency by the virus that requires strength and power to impose invasion similar to enemies in wars thus the use of the metaphor CORONA IS AN AGGRESSIVE ENEMY. Human features, specifically volition, are mapped onto the virus. The metaphor serves to remind the citizens of the danger and the controlling power of the virus which is used to explain the lack of highly demanded vaccine during a time of threat. It seems that the responsibility for the lack of securing the seasonal flu vaccinations is attributed to coronavirus and so the government is presented positively.

### PROTECTIVE MEASURES (MASKS, PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND CLEANLINESS) ARE WEAPONS

The battle against the virus has led to the use of specific weapons as indicated in example 5.

#### Example 5

لم تكل الدول وطواقمها الصحية من مقاتلة الوباء في معركة سلاحها (الكمامة والتباعد الجسدي والنظافة).

‘Countries and their health staff have not felt tired of fighting the epidemic in **a battle whose weapons are the mask, physical distancing and cleanliness.**’

(9 March 2020, P1)

In example 5, the medical tool الكمامة 'the mask', التباعد الاجتماعي 'social distancing', and personal behavior النظافة 'cleanliness' are used to represent weapons against the virus. A clear reference to weapons is indicated in معركة سلاحها 'a battle whose weapons are ...'.

*Example 6*

قال وزير الصحة الدكتور نذير عبيدات أن المعركة ما زالت مستمرة مع فيروس كوفيد-19، مؤكداً أن المواطن هو بطل المعركة، والسلاح الذي علينا استخدامه جميعاً هو الالتزام أكثر بارتداء الكمامات، والتباعد الجسدي.

'The Minister of Health, Dr. Nathir Obeidat, said that the battle is still ongoing with the Covid-19 virus, stressing that the citizen is the hero of the battle, and **the weapon that we all must use is more commitment to wearing masks, and physical distancing.**'

(2 December 2020, P2)

In example 6, الكمامات 'the masks', التباعد الاجتماعي 'physical distancing' appear to be the only weapons in the battle against the virus. A campaign under the slogan بحميهم 'I protect them' has been launched in November 2020 to promote mask wearing and to exemplify the accepted social behaviours (Ministry of Health, 2020). This campaign was accompanied by explanatory images, and it particularly aimed at boosting relaxed commitment among citizens ahead of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections which took place on 10th November 2020.

These examples are related to reification (Charteris-Black, 2004) where an abstract entity is referred to as a material one. However, it seems that the metaphor has not been very convincing to all citizens since the government imposed individual and institutional fines on those who were found to be non-compliant with these restrictive measures. These fines have been issued in May 2020 and intensified in September and October 2020 after the enactment of Defense Laws 12, 16, and 19 respectively (PSD, 2021).

**HEALTH STAFF ARE ARMY/ HEALTH STAFF ARE WARRIORS**

كما قدم شكره إلى "الجيش الأبيض" من الكوادر الصحية الذين هم في الخندق الأمامي. *Example 7*

'He also extended his appreciation to **the white army of medical staff** who are in the front trenches ....'

(22 May 2020, P1)

In example 7, الكوادر الصحية 'medical staff' are represented as الجيش الأبيض 'the white army' thus the conceptual metaphor HEALTH STAFF ARE ARMY is depicted.

*Example 8*

التقصي الوبائي ... محاربون شجعان يتعقبون كورونا.

'The epidemiological investigation teams... are **brave warriors** chasing corona.'

(11 October 2020, P2)

In example 8, التقصي الوبائي 'the epidemiological investigation team' are described as محاربون 'warriors'. The underlying metaphor is HEALTH STAFF ARE WARRIORS.

The representation of medical staff members as 'AN ARMY' or 'BRAVE WARRIORS' conveys the threatening danger that these workers may face while working in their natural environment.

DISOBEDIENT CITIZENS ARE CORONA's ALLIES

Example 9 from PI illustrates this sub type.

*Example 9*

كما أكد أن الإنسان المخلص هو الإنسان المنضبط الذي يطيع ولي الأمر خاصة، وأن هذه الطاعة فيها مصلحة للفرد والمجتمع في هذه الظروف، منوها بأن من يعارض قرارات الدولة هو حليف لكورونا.

'He also stressed that the sincere person is the disciplined person who obeys the ruler in particular and that this obedience is in the interest of the individual and society in these circumstances, noting that whoever opposes the decisions of the state is **an ally of corona.**'

(19 March 2020, P1)

In example 9, the MLE حليف كورونا 'an ally of corona' evokes the image of AN ENEMY WHO HAS ALLIES. These allies are all 'whoever opposes the decisions of the state.' Being an ally of an enemy indicates a sense of betrayal and so it is not a positive characteristic for an obedient disciplined citizen. The metaphor seems to bring to the attention two opposing parties: (1) those who comply with the government and its decisions, and (2) those who are against these decisions. No instances of this conceptual metaphor were found in P2.

The analysis of examples 2 to 9 reveals the subtypes of the conceptual metaphors employed by government officials under the larger umbrella of the WARFARE metaphor. This analysis provides a partial answer to the first research question as their different metaphorical linguistic manifestations frame the COVID-19 SITUATION AS A WAR. Framing the government's efforts to confront the virus as a battle, as in examples 1 and 2, leads to the acceptance of the virus as an enemy, and thus the need for united efforts to defeat it, as in examples 3 and 4. The human features that are mapped onto the virus add to its threatening image. In highlighting the strength of the virus, an indirect message is conveyed concerning the weakness of its opponent (i.e., the government and the citizens), particularly when the only weapons available are 'the mask and social distancing'. Nevertheless, the government officials repeatedly stressed the use of these weapons as a means of protecting citizens.

The images of an army of health workers presented in example seven and of health workers as warriors in example eight reveal the threat carried by the virus. Equating the work of medical staff as being as brave as the work of an army may have positive connotations. However, such metaphors detract from the customary neutrality of medical staff by changing this role into a military one. Armies and warriors are expected to be willing to sacrifice their lives during wars, and so casualties and deaths among health staff are merely the result of a war-time situation (Gillis, 2020).

The analysis of the conceptual metaphors listed above frames the combating of COVID-19 in Jordan as a military action requiring a persuasive effort from the government and sincere cooperation from the people. The WARFARE metaphor serves this purpose, and such a finding aligns with that of Alkhaldeh (2021) on the use of the WAR metaphor as a persuasive strategy. Our analysis also exemplifies the specific conceptual metaphors subsumed under the more general metaphor of DISEASE IS WAR, lending further support to Charteris-Black's proposal (2021, p. 35), viz. "[i]f we view war and disease as the most typical form of non-natural disasters, then each can always be employed to frame the other". Similarly, Flusberg et al. (2018) posited that WAR metaphors are notable as they arouse fear, set up a frame of an adversarial relationship, put any conflict within a defined time course. Further, our analysis shows that WAR metaphors used by government officials encompass different elements of a WAR scenario, such as a battlefield, enemy, opponents, and weapons. This finding aligns with the analysis of MILITARY metaphors used by

government officials in other countries (Charteris-Black 2021; Neshkovska & Trajkova 2021). It demonstrates how metaphors were used to persuade Jordanians that the virus is a threat and to raise their awareness of the need to respect the strict measures announced in the Defense Law (Jordanian Prime Ministry 2020). In a recent study, Crespo-Fernández (2021) suggested that the use of WARFARE metaphors is an effective way to reinforce the serious threat of the virus to the public health so that defeating it should be the responsibility of everyone.

The discussion has also shown examples of exaggerations or hyperbole made by some officials who used the metaphor HEALTH STAFF ARE ARMY. A hyperbolic metaphor operates on an analogy that is inappropriate in magnitude (cf. Shen & Wang, 2019). The term ‘army’ has a positive sense, as its main function is to defend the country and national interests. However, turning health workers into an army with which citizens had to cooperate, and the use of this army by the government to defeat the coronavirus, implies, at times, that these workers were being asked to sacrifice themselves and their rights and freedom in order for the country to win the war. This suggests a persuasive function of metaphor.

The analysis of the two sub-corpora reveals the use of similar subtypes of WARFARE metaphors in the two periods, as indicated in examples one to eight. The only difference observed between the two periods was found in example nine, DISOBEDIENT CITIZENS ARE CORONAVIRUS ALLIES. Instances of the ‘other’, i.e., coronavirus ‘ally’, were highlighted. The use of this metaphor may have been motivated by the fact that COVID-19 is viewed as a reality rather than a conspiracy theory. Further, officials aimed to warn citizens about the actions that could be taken in case of non-compliance with the restrictive measures (Safi, 2020).

#### CONTAINER METAPHOR

Charteris-Black (2006, p.575) states that image schema of “container is perhaps best conceived as a bounded space, rather than uniquely as a three-dimensional entity. A bounded space could exist in two, three or more dimensions and may be mental or physical”. To contain the virus, different measures were put in place in Jordan starting by complete closure and lockdown in March 2020. All suspected cases from outside Jordan were relocated to quarantine centers. Isolation of ‘hotspots’ was implemented.

Below are the conceptual mappings related to CONTAINER with illustrative examples along with their MLEs.

#### THE COUNTRY IS A BOUNDED SPACE/ CORONA IS A TRAVELLOR GETTING IN

##### Example 10

الصحة تشدد إجراءاتها الوقائية على المعابر الحدودية لمنع دخول كورونا.

‘Health Ministry tightens its preventive measures at border crossings **to prevent the entry** of corona.’

(23 February 2020, P1)

##### Example 11

قال عضو لجنة الأوبئة الدكتور بسام الحجاوي أنه لا يوجد أي أثر يدل على دخول السلالة الجديدة لفيروس كورونا إلى الأردن.

‘Member of the Epidemiology Committee, Dr. Bassam Al-Hijawi, said that there is no evidence that **the new variant of the coronavirus has entered** Jordan.’

(22 December 2020, P2)

In example 10, an image of the country as an entity that could be isolated from others is construed. Borders are boundaries that could be strengthened لمنع دخول ‘to prevent the entry’ of corona. In example 11, the country is represented as A BOUNDED SPACE that the virus may get into. In both examples, the images of A BOUNDED SPACE and A TRAVELER that has to be stopped from getting in are evoked.

#### PUBLIC LIFE IS AN ENTITY THAT CAN BE CLOSED

In example 12, public life is construed as an entity that can be ‘closed’.

##### Example 12

من المؤشرات الأخرى والمهمة التي تركز عليها الدولة لاتخاذ قرارات وإجراءات بغلق الحياة العامة ارتفاع نسبة الإصابات.

‘Another important indicator that the state relies on to make decisions and take measures to **close public life** is the high rate of injuries.’

(12 May 2020, P1)

In example 12, ‘public life’ is linked with the verb غلق ‘close’ which is usually used with containers. An image of PUBLIC LIFE BEING A CONTAINER is evoked. The reason for the closures is positively laid down to the audience, i.e., to reduce the infection rates.

#### A QUARANTINE IS A SPACE - BOUND CONTAINER (A PRISON)

##### Example 13

أكد وزير الدولة لشؤون الإعلام ... أنه يتم التحقيق مع الشباب الموجودين في الحجر العام، الذين خالفوا تعليمات التباعد الجسدي والوقاية المتبعة واللازمة للتعامل مع فيروس كورونا المستجد.

‘The Minister of State for Media Affairs ... confirmed that the young people **in the public quarantine**, who have violated the instructions for physical distancing are now being investigated.’

(6 May 2020, P1)

In example 13, ‘the public quarantine’ is represented as A SPACE IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE PLACED. Being in this location requires adherence to specific rules. The reason behind this statement is that a group of quarantined young men were having Dabka, a folkloric group dance, instead of complying with the measures of social distancing. This behavior was not accepted by the government and has led to punishing the group by shaving their hair bald.

##### Example 14

وهذا وفق البيان، ما يسمى علمياً وصحياً بالعزل الذكي، وهو عزل المنطقة أو الحي الموبوء، وقد نجحت الوزارة في تطبيق هذه الآلية في الرمثا وسحاب وعدة مناطق أخرى في المملكة.

‘This, according to the statement, is called smart isolation from a scientific and hygiene point of view, which is **isolating the affected area or neighborhood**, and the ministry has succeeded in implementing this mechanism in Ramtha, Sahab and several other regions in the Kingdom.’

(May 2020, P1)

In example 14, عزل ‘isolation’ of affected areas is implemented. An image of A PRISON is evoked. It could be inferred that at least some residents in these locations have committed criminal acts and thus all deserve punishment; an image that could easily be uncomfortably received. Sanderson and Meade (2020) criticize the use of lockdown in British government’s statements as it evokes PRISON and CRIME metaphors. In this context, being in a prison-like position may not be viewed favorably by Jordanian citizens.

**A COUNTRY IS A HOUSE/ CORONA IS A HYENA LEAVING THROUGH THE DOOR.**

The country is represented as a house in example 15.

*Example 15*

إذا دخل ضبع دارك، بتسكر الباب ولا بتخلي مفتوح؟ طبعاً بخلي الباب مفتوح، حتى يغادر الضبع، وهذا مثال لوضعنا مع كورونا نفتح المطارات والبلاد حتى يغادر الفيروس.

‘If a hyena enters your home, do you close the door or leave it open? Of course, you keep the door open, so that the hyena would leave, and this is an example of our situation with corona. We open airports and the country so that the virus would leave.’

(19 September 2020, P2)

Example 15 shows another image of a container, A HOUSE. The country is depicted as A HOUSE WITH A DOOR THAT COULD BE CLOSED. The advice in the example is to keep the door open so that the virus would leave. The virus, in this context, is described as A HYENA, a wild and carnivorous animal that is commonly found in the Jordan Valley and the eastern desert (Kempe et al. 2006), that mainly feeds on carrion. Although the statement aimed to justify the reopening of the borders despite the high infection with the virus, different media resources have reproduced this metaphor cynically (Younis and Altakhaineh, 2022).

The analysis of examples 10 to 14 shows the subtypes of the CONTAINER metaphors employed by government officials in the two periods: THE COUNTRY IS A BOUNDED SPACE /CORONAVIRUS IS A TRAVELER GETTING IN; PUBLIC LIFE IS AN ENTITY THAT CAN BE CLOSED; and QUARANTINE IS A SPACE-BOUND CONTAINER (A PRISON). These conceptual metaphors provide a partial answer to the first research question. The type of metaphor found in example 15 was only manifested in P2: A COUNTRY IS A HOUSE/ CORONAVIRUS IS A HYENA LEAVING THROUGH THE DOOR.

Charteris-Black (2006, p. 567) posits that CONTAINMENT and CONTROL are “two very closely related and mutually supportive concepts”. The CONTAINER metaphors are related to the notion of protection and security. The country is viewed as a safe place from the inside, and thus it is a container that should be protected from dangers outside the country, the city, or even the quarter, and neighborhood. The virus and its suspected carriers are unwelcome travelers who must be stopped, checked, and isolated. Different MLEs from the corpus realize this metaphor: العزل ‘isolation’, الحظر ‘quarantine’, منع ‘stopping or prohibiting’, الإغلاق ‘lockdown’, التباعد الاجتماعي ‘social distancing’, and التباعد الجسدي ‘physical distancing’.

The strict measures employed at the borders as described in example 12 represent positive connotations about the protective measures to control the virus. The CONTAINER metaphors seem to be acceptable for Jordanians as they opposed the irresponsibility of non-compliance with social distancing, as explained in example 13. The use of metaphors in this domain serves to persuade the public of the importance of restrictive measures and assure citizens that the situation is under control. The notion of protection is achieved by attempting to keep the virus out of and away from

the country, as conveyed in examples 12 and 15. They imply that a serious effort is needed to keep the threat of the virus away because the virus is not expected to ‘leave’ of its own accord. The wave of criticism around ‘the hyena theory’ led to the resignation of the health official who initiated the metaphor. Such criticism suggests that it is a metaphor that failed to match the collective reasoning at the time. This use draws on a cultural background in Jordan and probably beyond. A myth in the Jordanian Culture shows how cunning this wild animal is. It puts any person under a spell by pissing on his tail and spraying the drops in the face of the other. When the drops fall on any person, the myth says that this person will follow the hyena aimlessly (Accad, 1990). The image of this enemy leaving the container on its own accord and eventually disappear is not coherent with the WAR scenario nor with the cultural context. This seems to be in line with Kövecses’s (2021) argument on the contextualist view of metaphor where the discourse context influences the use of metaphor.

### OCEAN METAPHORS

The OCEAN metaphors are used to describe the spread of the virus and its movement.

#### THE VIRUS IS A FLUID THAT SPREADS ITSELF OVER A SURFACE

Example 16

في حال تفشي الإصابة بالفيروس سنعود للإجراءات المشددة.

‘In the event of **an outbreak** of the virus, we will return to strict measures.’

(8 May 2020, P1)

Example 17

كما ركز على أهمية وضع بروتوكول علاجي ... حتى نمنع تفشي الفيروس.

‘He focused on the importance of formulating a protocol for treatment ... to prevent a **virus outbreak**.

(20 December 2020,P2)

In examples 16 and 17, the word ‘تفشي’ ‘outbreak’ is used to describe the quick spread of the virus over a wide area. This spreading is happening quickly in the same manner that the fluid or dust spreads over a surface. The image of a LIQUID SPREADING OVER A SURFACE is evoked rather than the image of DUST SPREADING OVER A SURFACE because of the presence of the other metaphors that are related to the source domain WATER. Examples 18 and 19 illustrate this point.

#### THE VIRUS IS A WAVE/ COVID 19 IS AN OCEAN

Example 18

وأوضح في تصريحات للرأي إنه من المتوقع أن تشهد المملكة موجة ثانية من الفيروس.

‘And he explained in statements to *Al-Rai* that the Kingdom is expected to witness a **second wave of the virus**.’

(8 May 2020, P1)

Example 19

وتوقع عضو لجنة الأوبئة ... انحسار المنحنى الوبائي لانتشار فيروس كورونا.

‘A member of the Epidemiology Committee expected **the epidemiological curve of the spread of the Corona virus to recede.**’

(27 December 2020, P2)

In example 18, the virus spread is associated with the WAVE movement where ‘a second wave’ is expected in the kingdom. Waves are associated with uncontrollable water movement that evokes threat and fear. In example 19, the epidemiological curve is expected to recede. Here, an image of a backward water movement is evoked. As different countries worked to control the virus, less spread indicated a decrease in the danger level which is positive in general. Fluctuations in infection rates are represented graphically as waves and indeed referring to a series of pandemic infections as waves is a common practice (Charteris-Black, 2021). WAVE movement indicates uncontrollability, by itself and so it has provided the government with the tool to keep its face in its battle against the virus. Further, the movement of WAVES is less threatening than that of TSUNAMIS. Thus, it could be argued that the OCEAN and WAVE metaphor was used to raise awareness and to warn people of the threat of the virus without exaggerating the situation.

### JOURNEY METAPHORS

Lakoff (1987, p.275) argues that “complex events in general are also understood in terms of a source-path-goal schema: complex events have initial states (source), a sequence of intermediate stages (path) and a final stage (destination)”. The experiential bases of journey metaphors involve image schemes which identify a path, a point of departure, source(s) or means of movement, the destination or goal, and the travellers (Kövecses, 2002). These ideas and images construct a conceptual mapping in which a purposeful activity is conceptualised as a process of travelling along a path towards a destination (Lakoff, 1993). With the primary metaphor purposes are destinations the goal is the survival of the pandemic. The journey metaphors manifest in describing COVID-19 situation as in examples 20 and 21.

#### DEALING WITH COVID-19 IS SAILING A SHIP / COMPLIANCE IS A PATH TO SURVIVAL

Example 20

الوضع القائم اليوم كالسفينة إما أن يحسن رباتها قيادتها ويتعاون جميع ركابها معه ، بالامتثال لتعليماته ... لتتحقق نجاة الجميع إن شاء الله.

‘**The situation today is similar to a ship.** Either the captain masters its leadership and all its passengers cooperate with him, **by complying to the instructions, .... to achieve survival for all,** God Almighty willing.’

(3 April 2020, P1)

In example 20, a comparison is made between dealing with the critical situation of COVID and sailing a ship. The citizens are mapped into passengers of the ship. The focus is on the means of survival through the commitment of all citizens. Charteris-Black (2006) and Crespo -Fernández (2021) argued that political leaders use JOURNEY metaphors to create solidarity for the attainment of positively evaluated purposes. In this case, such solidarity will enable moving forward with the measures established to restrict the spread of the virus.



THE JUMP IN THE NUMBER OF COVID -19 CASES IS A TURNING POINT

Example 21

إن القفزة في أعداد الاصابات اليومية ... تمثل منعرجا وتطورا جديدا ... وتؤكد دخول الأردن في مرحلة الانتشار المجتمعي.

‘The increase in the number of daily infections ... is a **turning point** and a new development ... and confirms that Jordan entered the stage of societal spread.’

(9 September 2020, P2)

Here, the MLE ‘turning point’ is significant as it conveys a change in the situation in the country, caused by a leap in the daily figures. The metaphor supports how the government seeks to gain recognition that the virus has spread within society. Thus, herd immunity could be the route by which the virus disappears.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN THE TWO PERIODS

The current study meant to explore whether or not any differences in the use of metaphors in the two identified periods could be identified and analyzed. Upon examining the conceptual metaphors in the two samples, the identified metaphors were presented in Table 2. Similarities and differences between the two periods are observed in the frequency of source domains. Figure 1 below visually presents a comparison of the two periods based on the percentage of the source domains in the data.

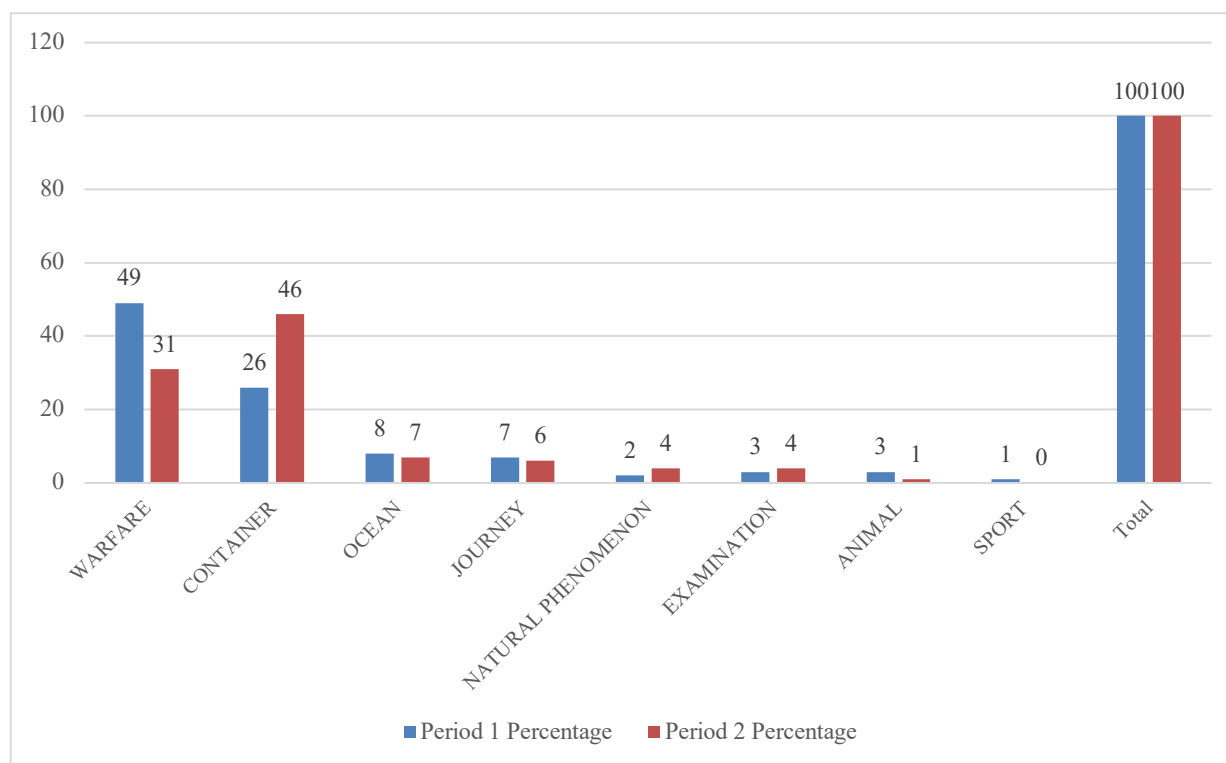


FIGURE 1. Comparison of the two periods based on the percentage of the source domains Source Domains and their Percentages by Period

As indicated in the figure above, both periods share a resemblance in terms of the types of conceptual metaphors. The percentages derived indicated that COVID-19 is more linked to WAR and CONTAINER than to any other metaphors in the two periods. WAR metaphors are the most prominent source domain in P1 amounting to almost half of the total identified metaphors (49%). This may be attributed to the priority of the Jordanian government in this period, that is convincing people of the threat of the virus and the importance of complying to imposed restrictive measures. In P2, the CONTAINER metaphor took over. They constituted an average of 46 percent of the identified metaphors. This change seems to indicate a slight shift in the focus of the messages used by government officials in each period.

The differences between the two periods with regard to the subtypes of the conceptual metaphors were marginal. To mention a difference, the conceptual metaphor DISOBEDIENT CITIZENS ARE CORONA'S ALLIES was identified in P1 data of the WAR source domain, but it was absent from P2 data. Further, there is one subtype of the CONTAINER metaphors identified in P2 but absent in P1 which is A COUNTRY IS A HOUSE/ CORONAVIRUS IS A HYENA LEAVING THROUGH THE DOOR. The two periods do not seem to have a significant influence on the rhetoric of Jordanian government officials exemplified in the identified conceptual metaphors.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study examined the COVID-19 conceptual metaphors and their pragmatic and communicative functions. The metaphors were extracted from Arabic daily news stories reporting statements made by Jordanian government officials in 2020. To this end, an analysis of 213 news stories was conducted based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) CMT, revealing 606 MLEs. These MLEs were grouped into eight source domains: WARFARE; CONTAINER; OCEAN; JOURNEY;; NATURAL PHENOMENON; EXAMINATION and SPORT. These metaphors varied in frequency according to the period in which they appeared. The results show that the WAR and CONTAINER metaphors were the most frequent, followed by OCEAN and JOURNEY. The study then explored in detail the conceptual metaphors of these four source domains, ignoring the other domains due to their limited frequency.

It was clear that the Jordanian government officials used the WAR metaphor in their statements to serve several pragmatic and communicative functions, namely, 1) to persuade Jordanians of the threat posed by the virus; 2) to remind Jordanians to respect the measures enacted in the Defense Law; and, 3) to gain approval from the public to achieve positive self-representation. These results follow those of similar studies in other countries, particularly UK, Spain, Germany, France and USA (e.g., Crespo-Fernández, 2021; Neshkovska & Trajkova, 2021), and in Jordan (Alkhaldeh, 2021). One conceptual metaphor, DISOBEDIENT CITIZENS ARE CORONA'S ALLIES, was only seen in the first period. This may be attributed to the fact that COVID-19 has become a painful reality. The difference in frequency between periods one and two seems to align with the general decline in the use of WAR metaphors suggesting that they may have been more rhetorically persuasive in the early stages of the pandemic.

The analysis revealed that the CONTAINER and OCEAN metaphors were also mainly used for persuasion. In both periods, convincing citizens to accept restrictive measures and government plans was a major task for the government possibly because the severity of COVID-19 has not significantly changed throughout the two periods. The personification of the virus as a TRAVELER THAT HAD TO BE STOPPED AND/OR ISOLATED was the means to achieve this purpose. MLEs depicting isolation and lockdown were evident in the data. However, the government officials did

not always achieve what they intended, as was seen in the QUARANTINE IS A SPACE-BOUND CONTAINER (A PRISON) metaphor, which shows the rejection of isolation and social distancing. The cynical wave of criticism concerning the ‘hyena theory’, shown in example 15, shows the lack of acceptance of a metaphor representing how the virus might leave on its own accord. This could be attributed to fact that all WAR metaphors conveyed the meaning of an enemy invading the country, and the subsequent need to use force to defeat it. The image of this enemy leaving the CONTAINER is not coherent with the WAR scenario, and thus was not welcomed in Jordanian society. This seems to align with Kövecses’ (2021) contextualist view, where the discourse context influences the use of metaphor. OCEAN metaphors had a similar persuasive impact for convincing critics of the measures taken by the government, achieved by presenting the virus as a quickly spreading threat moving in an uncontrollable way. Similarly, JOURNEY metaphors represented the way to end the pandemic; they also stressed the solidarity of the nation, and thus are persuasive.

The study uncovered the shifts in the public perceptions of the COVID-19 complex situation. It demonstrated the role of COVID-19 conceptual metaphors in forming the public consciousness of the pandemic. Further, the study highlighted the power of language and its manipulative nature in this context. For example, the use of war metaphors made the public think of the virus as an enemy, while the HYENA metaphor meant that the virus will gradually go away on its own, and hence the public’s unfavorable response. The study mapped specific political implications of the language used during the year 2020. This study may assist government agencies to use the right metaphors to impact the public opinion and win the masses to its stands. Future linguistic research into the Coronavirus discourse could examine the virus further by investigating the non-linguistic features of the disease discourse by implementing a multimodal method. Finally, the study can be developed to become a contrastive study of the Corona virus political discourse in Jordan and those found in other Arab countries.

## REFERENCES

- Accad, E. (1990). *Sexuality and War: Literary Masks of the Middle East*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Alkhalaf, A. (2021). Persuasive Strategies of Jordanian Government in Fighting Covid-19. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*. 21(1), 274-293. <http://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2101-16>.
- Almuraiti, H. (2020). Conceptual metaphor for COVID-19 in Australian newspapers. Unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Melbourne, Australia.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*. Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2006). Britain as a Container: Immigration Metaphors in the 2005 Election Campaign. *Discourse and Society*. 17(6), 563–582. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506066345>
- Charteris-Black, J. (2011). *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2019). *Metaphors of Brexit*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28768-9>
- Charteris-Black, J. (2021). *Metaphors of Coronavirus Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Crespo-Fernández, E. (2018). Euphemism as a Discursive Strategy in US Local and State Politics. *Journal of Language and Politics* 17(6), 789-811. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.17040.cre>
- Crespo-Fernández, E. (2021). Metaphors Used to Communicate the Coronavirus State of Emergency in the United Kingdom and Spain: A Contrastive Analysis. *Miscelanea. A Journal of English and American Studies*. 64, 13-36. [https://doi.org/10.26754/ojs\\_misc/mj.20216050](https://doi.org/10.26754/ojs_misc/mj.20216050)
- Dictionary of COVID-19 Terms (English- French -Arabic). (2020). *Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization*. Rabat. Morocco. Retrieved August 10, 2022, from <http://www.alecso.org/nsite/images/pdf/6-5-2020.pdf>
- El-Sharif, A. (2012). Metaphors We Believe by: Islamic Doctrine as Evoked by the Prophet Muhammad's Metaphors. *Critical Discourse Studies*. 9(3), 231-245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2012.688209>
- Flusberg, S, Matlock, J & Thibodeau, P. (2018). War Metaphors in Public Discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*. 33(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2018.1407992>
- Gillis, M. (2020). Ventilators, Missiles, Doctors, Troops. The Justification of Legislative Responses to COVID-19 Through Military Metaphors. *Law and Humanities*. 14(2), 135-159.
- Hamdan, J. (2011). Newspaper Stories on HIV/AIDS in Jordan : A Look into the Lexicon. *International Journal of Arabic and English Studies*. 12, 115-130.
- Jordanian Ministry of Health. (2020). COVID-19 in Jordan. <https://corona.moh.gov.jo/ar/MediaCenter/1467>. Accessed online on March 16, 2022.
- Jordanian Prime Ministry. (2020). Order Defense Laws. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200701062141/http://www.pm.gov.jo/upload/files/Order-Defense-2.pdf>. Accessed online on March 21 2022.
- Kempe, S., Al-Malabeh, A., Döppes, D., Frehat, M., Henshel, H.V., & Rosendahl, W. (2006). Hyena Caves in Jordan. *Scientific Annals, School of Geology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)*, 98, 201-212.
- Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2015). *Where Metaphors Come From: Reconsidering Context in Metaphor*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2021). Standard and extended conceptual theory revisited: Some definitional and taxonomic issues. In Wen, Xu and John R. Taylor (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (pp. 191-204). New York: Routledge.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). 'The Death of Dead Metaphor'. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 2, 143-147.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The Contemporary theory of metaphor. In Ortony, Andrew (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 202-251). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Musu, Costanza. (2020). War Metaphors Used for COVID-19 are Compelling but also Dangerous. In *The Conversation*. Accessed online on 15 February 2021 from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8frxvw>
- Neshkovska, S. & Trajkova, Z. (2021). Coronavirus–inspired Metaphors in Political Discourse. *Thesis*. 9(2), 99-132.

- Pragglejaz Group. (2007). 'MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse'. *Metaphor and Symbol*. 22(1), 1-39.
- Public Security Directorate (PDS). (2021). Defense Laws. Accessed online on 15 February 2021 from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8enn5t>
- Ruiz de Mendosa, F. & Pérez-Hernández, L. (2011). The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: Myths and Challenges. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 26, 161-185.
- Safi, M. (2020). Coronavirus: 400 Arrested in Jordan for Violating Nationwide Curfew. Guar. In *The Guardian*. Accessed online on 15 April 2022 from <https://tinyurl.com/kd4bav9b>
- Sanderson, B. & Meade, D. (2020). Pandemic Metaphors. Public Interest Research Group, Accessed online on 15 February 2021 from <https://publicinterest.org.uk/part-4-metaphors/#more-11066>
- Semino, E. (2021). Not Soldiers but Fire-fighters– Metaphors and Covid-19. *Health communication*, 36(1), 50-58. Retrieved October 10, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1844989>
- Shen, L, & Wang, X. (2019). A corpus-based study on metaphor and hyperbole in English news discourse. In 4th International Conference on Humanities Science, Management and Education Technology (HSMET 2019), 589-595.
- Steen, G. (2011). The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor - Now New and Improved!. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*. (9)1, 26-64. <https://doi.org/10.1075/rcl.9.1.03ste> The Comprehensive Dictionary of Meaning. Accessed online on March 2021 from <http://www.almaany.com/appendix.php?language=arabic&category>
- USAID, (2020), Jordan Media Assessment. Accessed online on 8 March 2021 from [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00WQVH.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WQVH.pdf)
- Younis, A.S., & Altakhaineh , A.R.M. (2022). Metaphors and Metonymies Used in Memes to Depict COVID-19 in Jordanian Social Media Websites. *Ampersand*. 9, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2022.100087>
- Zibin, A. & Hamdan, J. (2019). The Conceptualisation of Fear through Conceptual Metonymy and Metaphor in Jordanian Arabic. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*. 19(2), 239-262. <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes2000.19.2.1>

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Hanan Hasan El- Kanash is a Chief, Teaching and Learning Division in the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA). She is a PhD Candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

Jihad M. Hamdan is a Professor of Psycholinguistics in the Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan. He is also the Editor-in-Chief of International Journal of Arabic-English Studies and President of the Association of Professors of English and Translation at Arab Universities.