

Conceptual Metaphors in Jordan Parliamentary Elections Headlines

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This study aims at exploring and identifying the use of metaphors in Jordan parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan. The data of the study consist of 50 headlines derived from RASED Jordan website. A Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) is used to achieve the study aims. In this regard, the framework of Pragglejaz Group (2007) is adopted to identify the metaphors in the corpus. The results of the study revealed that there are four conceptual metaphors in Jordan parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan. They are “ELECTION IS WAR”, “ELECTION IS A FIRE”, “ELECTION IS A RACE”, and “ELECTION IS A HEALTH STATUS”. The study findings also indicated that the most dominant metaphor is “ELECTION IS WAR”, while the least common one is “ELECTION IS A HEALTH STATUS”.

Keywords: metaphor, conceptual metaphor, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, elections

Introduction

Jordan parliamentary elections have been held every four years since the 1980s. The last parliamentary elections in Jordan was held in November 2020. As soon as the date of the 2020 parliamentary election was announced by the Independent Election Commission (henceforth IEC), reporting on the elections has begun to appear in media, including local newspapers, websites, and social media. Amongst the many websites that submitted influential, key reports about Jordan Parliamentary elections were RASED Jordan. As far as this study is concerned, the focus here is to examine the conceptual metaphors found in Jordan parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan. Therefore, it is a humble attempt to identify and categorize kinds of metaphors that were used and adopted in Jordan parliamentary elections by RASED Jordan in the year 2020.

Conceptual metaphors were the focus of many studies in the field of linguistics (Gong, Ahrens, & Huang, 2008). The meaning of the word metaphor is derived from the Greek word “*metaphora*” which means a transfer/carry (Alhansawy, 2007). For Aristotle, the concept of metaphor refers to “giving the thing the name that belongs to something else” (Zhang & Hu, 2009, p. 77). According to Lakoff (1993), “the word ‘metaphor’ was defined as a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of their normal conventional meaning to express a similar concept” (p. 202). However, in the perspective of the cognitive linguistic, metaphor is defined as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 4).

Not far from this background, metaphor is often viewed from two different perspectives, namely the linguistic perspective and the cognitive one. The linguistic perspective, or the traditional view of metaphor, views metaphor as the figurative expressions used in literature texts to achieve poetic language functions. By contrast, the cognitive perspective, being a new approach to study metaphor, considers metaphor in light of the human cognitive system. The cognitive perspective was initially proposed by the two philosophers and linguists George Lakoff and Mark Jonson in 1980 in their influential book *Metaphors We Live By*. They called it Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which came as a rejection to the traditional perspective. To Lakoff and Jonson (1980), metaphor is not just a matter of language but a matter of thought and action, that is, metaphor is prevalent both in thought and everyday language, and thus inevitable.

Two domains are closely relevant to the conceptual metaphor; they are source domain and target domain. The source domain is the concept domain used to understand another concept domain, whereas the target domain is the concept domain understood by the concept of source domain. To this effect, the metaphor is understood via a mapping (a set of systematic correspondences) from the source domain (e.g., entity, basic thing, people familiar with) to the target domain (more abstract, vague thing). Accordingly, in “Life Is Journey”, life is considered to be the target domain, while journey is the source domain (Kövecses, 2002, p. 4).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provided three main types of conceptual metaphors that govern people’s ordinary concepts. They are orientational metaphor, structural metaphor, and ontological metaphor. These are discussed below in detail.

Orientational Metaphor

Orientational metaphors are also called spatialization as most of them come from our perception of space. They express the understanding of a process or event in terms of spatial orientation configuration. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stated that “spatial orientations like up-down, front-back, on-off, center-periphery, and near-far provide an extraordinarily rich basis for understanding concepts in orientational terms” (p. 26). Orientational metaphors give a concept a spatial orientation; for instance, “happy is up”. The fact that the concept “happy” is oriented up leads to English expressions like “I’m feeling *up* today” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 16).

Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphors represent “cases where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 14) and “the source domain provides a relatively rich knowledge structure for the target concept” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 37). As a matter of fact, this is the kind of metaphor that what most people conventionally know or understand as metaphor. In the “argument is war” metaphor, we have a structural metaphor as it includes the mapping of one kind of experience (which is “argument”) onto another (which is “war”). This is the metaphor that underlies expressions such as “He defended his argument” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 48).

Ontological Metaphor

Lacey (1996) stated that ontology is a central branch of metaphysics that studies being, and in particular, nowadays, what there is, e.g., material objects, minds, persons, universals, numbers, facts, etc. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provided some examples of this type of metaphor. One illustrative example is “my mind is a machine”. Our experience of physical objects and substances provides a further basis for understanding—one that goes beyond mere orientation. Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind. Once we

can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them—and, by this means, reason about them.

To this effect, RASED Jordan uses conceptual metaphor in their reports in order to attract the attention of readers. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no single study has attempted to examine the use of metaphors in Jordan parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan. The absence of the studies on such an important topic has motivated the researcher to conduct the study at hand. Therefore, it came to fill the gap in the literature.

The main aim of the present study is to explore and identify the use of metaphors in Jordan parliamentary elections headlines used by RASED Jordan by investigating how parliamentary elections are symbolized by the use of conceptual metaphors. In particular, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the conceptual metaphors identified in the Jordanian parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan in 2020?
2. What is the most frequent type of metaphors in the Jordanian parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan in 2020?

Up to the researcher's best knowledge, there is no study that has explored the use of conceptual metaphors in Jordan parliamentary elections. As a result, this study is significant as it attempts to explore an area that has never been investigated at all before. This study examines the use of the conceptual metaphors used in Jordan Parliamentary elections headlines on RASED Jordan website. Hence, the fruits of the present study are expected to give some benefits to linguists in particular and laypeople in general.

The present study has two limitations. Firstly, it is restricted to tackle the use of metaphors in Jordan parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASED Jordan. Secondly, it is restricted to the period from August 2020 to November 2020.

Previous Studies

Conceptual metaphors have been studied by many scholars. For example, Linkevičiūtė (2019) examined conceptual metaphors in Donald Trump's political discourse (2018) which is aimed at his own positioning as an extremely positive and beneficial president who will "make America great again". Furthermore, Trump implicitly and explicitly treats his opponents—the Democrats and previous governments as enemies who are guilty for all the problems and troubles in the USA. Linguistic expressions of the following conceptual metaphors "politics is war", "politics is a journey", "politics is a race", "politics is a crime", "politics is love", "politics is friendship" prevail in Donald Trump's political discourse. There are also some expressions of conceptual metaphors, such as "politics is a game", "politics is water", and "politics is sleep" in Trump's political discourse. However, Linkevičiūtė's (2019) studied confined itself to examining the political discourse of one individual, and tried wrongly to generalize the findings.

In addition, Purba and Sufriati (2018) identified "war" metaphors in Indonesian political discourse and their translation into English. The data were obtained from Tempo Magazine, during January to March 2018, with 29 political articles covering the political elections of 2018 and 2019. To discover the concept of metaphor, this study applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), formulated by Pragglejaz Group (2007), was used in this study to avoid intuition during metaphor identification. This study found that "war" metaphor was positively pervasive in Indonesian political discourse. There were 49 metaphorical war expressions with a total of 239 occurrences. A

cross-mapping from war domain to politics domain was soldier to political candidate, war strategy to campaign strategy, battleground to political elections, target to power, alliance to parties coalition, and weapon to votes. The conceptual mapping highlights politics as a battle for power and hides politics as an attempt to proper people. However, only war metaphors were examined in Purba and Sufriati's (2018) study.

Bratoz (2012), however, examined metaphors in the discourse of elections from a cross-linguistic perspective. The methodological framework brings together the conceptual theory of metaphor. In addition, a cross-linguistic approach to analyzing metaphors in discourse is suggested following Kövecses' (2005) criteria for cultural and linguistic universality and variation in metaphor. The analysis is based on a corpus of newspaper articles related to the elections held in 2008 in Slovenia and those held in the USA in the same year. The results suggest that while there is a certain degree of universality in terms of the predominant conceptual metaphors, there are also important variations between the two languages and cultures in question, such as the ubiquity of metaphorically motivated terminology and election jargon identified in (American) English texts. Bratoz's (2012) study is a contrastive study that tries to establish similarities and differences between two different languages and cultures with regard to the use of conceptual metaphors.

Taiwo (2010) studied metaphors in Nigerian political discourse. The study blended the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with that of Cognitive Linguistics originated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to discuss metaphoric expressions found in the data. He identified three target domains as sources of conceptual metaphors in the data: the nation, politicians, and politics. He reported that the "nation" was conceptualized as a "family" and as a "person". He also identified the conceptual mappings of "politics as battle" and "politics as a journey". There was also the conceptual mapping of the "politician as a builder". Apparently, Taiwo's (2010) study is concerned with finding out the different domains and sources of conceptual domain. However, the analysis provided is very minor.

Methodology

In this section, the researcher explains the methodology followed and used in the study at hand.

Corpus

The corpus of the study at hand consists of 50 headlines of Jordan Parliamentary elections. The headlines were all selected from RASED Jordan Website (<https://www.RASEDjo.com/ar>) from August 2020 to November 2020. The researcher chose this particular website because of its popularity. The researcher also chose that particular period of time because it is the period in which the news reports were written extensively.

Data Collection

As explained earlier, the data of the present study were obtained from RASED Jordan website during the period from August 2020 to November 2020. The researcher himself surfed the website in order to select the relevant headlines.

Data Analysis

The collected data have shown a great tendency to using metaphors in describing or titling the process of Parliamentary elections in Jordan. This was included in almost every news headline in the corpus. The metaphor items in the study sample were written off as parts of big "conceptual metaphors". These conceptual metaphors are: "ELECTION IS WAR", "ELECTION IS A FIRE", "ELECTION IS A RACE", and

“ELECTION IS A HEALTH STATUS”. The following lines discuss each conceptual metaphor with examples taken from the study sample.

Election Is War

This conceptual metaphor is the most frequent in use in the study sample. Metaphor items that were identified as members of this conceptual metaphor included words or phrases of battles, fights, killing, and so on. The following are examples on this type:

Headline	أنباء عن تحالف نائبين سابقين أحدهم من نفس الكتلة والآخر من أئتلة أخرى
Translation	News about the alliance of two former deputies, one from the same list and the other from another list
Metaphor	Collaboration in elections as setting alliances

تحالف (in English: an alliance)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “تحالف” means “تعاون” that means collaboration in elections.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “تحالف” is a union or association formed between countries or organizations for mutual benefit.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase التعاون الانتخابي in terms of the process (التحالف). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Headline	عشرون يوما على الصدام الانتخابي المحتدم
Translation	Twenty days until the raging election clash
Metaphor	Elections as a raging clash

الصدام الانتخابي المحتدم (in English: the raging election clash)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “صدام محتدم” means “منافسة قوية” that refers to a electoral competition.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “صدام” is a fight between two groups of people.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (المنافسة الانتخابية) in terms of the process (الصدام المحتدم). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Headline	نواب سابقون يعدون العدة للترشح للانتخابات
Translation	Former deputies preparing to run for the start of the elections
Metaphor	Elections as preparing for a military campaign

يعدون العدة (in English: prepare for a military campaign)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “يعد العدة” means “يستعد” that means being ready for the competition.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “يعد العدة” is to prepare a set of articles or equipment needed for a specific purpose.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (المنافسة الانتخابية) in terms of the process (إعداد العدة). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Headline	قائمة انتخابية تقصف قوائم اخرى
Translation	An electoral list bombing other lists
Metaphor	Electoral competitions as bombing

تقصف (in English: bombing)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “تقصف” means “تتنافس” that refers to an electoral competition.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “قصف” is an attack (a place or vehicle) with a bomb or bombs.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase المنافسة الانتخابية in terms of the process (القصف). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Election Is A Fire

This is the second most frequent conceptual metaphor. It included metaphor items that have words or phrases of setting fire, flaring up, and so on. The following are examples on this:

Headline	البادية الشمالية تشتعل انتخابياً
Translation	Northern Badia flared up for elections
Metaphor	Elections as setting fire

تشتعل انتخابياً (in English: flared up for elections)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “تشتعل انتخابياً” means “تتنافس انتخابياً” that means stating the election campaigns.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “تشتعل” is to catch fire or cause to catch fire.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (المنافسة الانتخابية) in terms of the process (الاشتعال). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Headline	جبل النار اشتعل المنافسة الانتخابية في مناطق البادية الشمالية
Translation	Jabal Alnar ignited the electoral competition in the northern Badia regions
Metaphor	Elections as setting fire

اشتعال المنافسة (in English: flared up for elections)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “اشتعال المنافسة” means “بدء المنافسة” that means stating the start of the election campaigns.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “تشتعل” is to catch fire or cause to catch fire.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (المنافسة الانتخابية) in terms of the process (الاشتعال). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Election Is A Race

This is the third most frequent conceptual metaphor. It included metaphor items that have words or phrases of competition, sports, races, and so on. The following are examples on this:

Headline	خروج أربعة قوائم انتخابية من سباق المنافسة
Translation	Four electoral lists exit from the competition race
Metaphor	Elections as a race

سياق المنافسة (in English: the competition race)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “سباق المنافسة” refers to “العملية الانتخابية” that means stating the election campaigns.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “سباق” is a competition between runners, horses, vehicles, boats, etc., to see which is the fastest in covering a set course.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (المنافسة الانتخابية) in terms of the process (السباق). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Headline	فقدت السيطرة على الدوري الانتخابي في الدوري الأول بدائرة بدو الشمال
Translation	The control has been lost of the electoral league in the first league in the Northern Bedouin district
Metaphor	Elections as a league

الدوري الانتخابي (in English: the electoral league)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “الدوري الانتخابي” means “المنافسة الانتخابية” that means stating the election campaigns.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “الدوري” is a group of sports clubs which play each other over a period for a championship.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (المنافسة الانتخابية) in terms of the process (الدوري الانتخابي). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Election Is A Health Status

In this conceptual metaphor, the election events are linked to the health status. It included metaphor items that have words or phrases of wellness, illness, and so on. The following are examples on this:

Headline	ثلاثة قوائم انتخابية في دائرة بدو الشمال حالتها الصحية العامة سيئة
Translation	Three electoral lists in the Bedouin district of the North are in poor general health
Metaphor	Electoral lists with little votes as having an unhealthy condition

حالتها الصحية سيئة (in English: poor general health)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “حالة صحية سيئة” means “نسبة تصويت قليلة” that means having a very low vote percentage.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “الحالة الصحية السيئة” is having a disease or period of sickness affecting the body or mind.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (قلة نسبة التصويت) in terms of the process (سوء الحالة الصحية). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Headline	قوائم انتخابية تدخل العناية المركزة
Translation	Electoral lists enter the intensive care unit
Metaphor	Electoral lists with little votes as having an unhealthy condition

تدخل العناية المركزة (in English: enter the intensive care unit)

A. Contextual meaning: In this context, the idiomatic expression, “دخول العناية المركزة” means “التصويت قلة” that means having a very low vote percentage.

B. Basic meaning: The basic meaning of the expression “دخول العناية المركزة” is entering the hospital in the intensive care unit.

C. Contextual meaning vs. basic meaning: The basic meaning contrasts with the contextual meaning and can only be understood through drawing a comparison with it. We can understand the phrase (قلة نسبة التصويت) in terms of the process (دخول العناية المركزة). This expression hence includes a metaphorical meaning.

Discussion

In light of the aforementioned data analysis, we come up with the image of the Jordan parliamentary elections through analyzing the metaphors used in describing the processing and events of it. The election is highly linked with war, as this was the most frequent metaphor in the study sample. This can be explained as the society culture usually links the winning of the election to achieving a victory in a real war; and the loss of it as being defeated in a real war. Furthermore, the winner of the elections is being imaged as a hero that is similar to a great extent to the military hero. Also, the process of elections is linked to setting fire to depict the temperature of the experience that is (or should be) always hot, boiling, and flaring. Moreover, the election is imaged as a race that should determine winners and losers at the end of the race; and it is to some degrees connected with the leagues of sports where there are always winners and losers. Finally, the process is being associated to the health status; that is, the winner is feeling well and healthy and the loser is ill and losing his/her health.

Conclusion

The present study adopted the idea that metaphor is a cognitive process in which some kind of mapping links two different concepts. Accordingly, our thoughts and experiences are the constituents that make our language metaphorical. In this vein, studying metaphors in several contexts assists us to understand how these contexts are conceptualized in our minds.

The present study attempted to explore and identify the conceptual metaphors in Jordan Parliamentary elections headlines as used by RASSED Jordan website. Here, the study attempted to show how election is conceptualized by people.

To achieve the goals of the study, a Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) was used. As for methodology, the framework of Pragglejaz Group (2007) was adopted to identify the metaphors in the corpus. This framework requires intensive reading of every headline to find the items that are used metaphorically. The sample of the study consisted of 50 headlines taken from RASSED Jordan website from the period August 2020 to November 2020.

The findings of the study revealed that there are four conceptual metaphors in Jordan Parliamentary elections headlines. These conceptual metaphors are “ELECTION IS WAR”, “ELECTION IS A FIRE”,

“ELECTION IS A RACE” and “ELECTION IS A HEALTH STATUS”. It also revealed that the most occurring one is “ELECTION IS WAR”, while the least occurring one is “ELECTION IS A HEALTH STATUS”.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the researcher recommends that other studies be to be conducted in order to explore and identify the use of metaphors in elections news headlines in both Arabic and English; this helps to establish the similarities and differences between the two languages with regard to the use of metaphors in this regard. It is suggested that further research could attempt to analyze and identify the use of conceptual metaphors in political news reports in Jordan.

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