

A Metaphor Analysis of the Issues Palestine Genocide in Online News Texts

Kafka Nabawi Suherman*

English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University, Indonesia

Abstract

This study looks into what kinds of metaphors are utilized in Al Jazeera headlines about Palestine. Using qualitative research methods, 16 headlines were examined using Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, which divides metaphors into structural, orientational, and ontological categories. The study found that orientational metaphors are the most common (50%), followed by ontological (31.25%) and structural metaphors (18.75%). The prevalence of orientational metaphors emphasizes Al Jazeera's use of spatial and relational language to frame the Palestinian struggle and complex global concerns.

Keywords: Metaphor; palestine; al-jazeera; online news text

Abstrak

Penelitian ini melihat jenis metafora apa saja yang digunakan dalam berita utama Al Jazeera tentang Palestina. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, 16 berita utama diteliti dengan menggunakan teori metafora konseptual Lakoff dan Johnson, yang membagi metafora ke dalam kategori struktural, orientasional, dan ontologis. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa metafora orientasional adalah yang paling umum (50%), diikuti oleh metafora ontologis (31,25%) dan struktural (18,75%). Prevalensi metafora orientasional menekankan penggunaan bahasa spasial dan relasional oleh Al Jazeera untuk membingkai perjuangan Palestina dan masalah global yang kompleks.

Kata kunci: Metafora; palestina; al-jazeera; teks berita online

***Corresponding Author**

Email Address: kfkasuherman28@gmail.com

Introduction

Everyday conversation is rife with metaphor. It is well known to facilitate effective communication, influence others, and comprehension of difficult subjects Thibodeau et al., (2019). Usually, metaphors are found in written works such as poems, novels, poems as well as song lyrics, but also now movies, pictures or paintings can be used as metaphors that do not have very deep emotions, metaphors can be in the pictures or symbols that have certain messages, emotions, and meanings in them that can be sarcastic or parables as conveyed by Kennedy (1982) and (Prattis, n.d.). In Pawel Kuczynski illustration work "Apple" he painted his illustration using an earth-tone background, with an illustration of a boy with dark skin and shabby clothes. This is a metaphorical picture of economic inequality, education and racism. As we know there are many issues about economic

inequality and racism among us that can lead to conflict such as what is happening to the Palestinians now who are experiencing genocide from Israel. Social media are internet-based platforms for sharing and exchanging information, ideas, and photos/videos Adinda et al., (2021). Social media sites offer a forum for users to connect and exchange information, even if they are located in different cities or countries.

In today's interconnected world, digital media plays a vital role in shaping public opinion, disseminating information, and influencing global discourse. The rapid evolution of digital platforms has transformed how news is delivered, making it more immediate and accessible Kolbitsch & Maurer (2006). With social media, news apps, and online news outlets becoming increasingly dominant, traditional forms of journalism are being supplemented, and sometimes even replaced, by digital formats. For example, Al Jazeera, as a leading digital media outlet. Initially founded as a satellite news network, Al Jazeera has evolved into a major global media presence through its digital platforms.

Al Jazeera is a prominent global news network known for its in-depth coverage of various international issues, including conflicts and humanitarian crises in the Middle East Pipit Mulyah et al. (2020). As a leading platform for diverse perspectives, it plays a critical role in shaping global narratives surrounding complex geopolitical events, particularly in regions like Palestine. With its wide-reaching influence, Al Jazeera's reporting helps provide an international lens through which audiences can understand the political and social dimensions of the Palestinian struggle. There are various metaphors that are interesting to investigate, so research is needed to determine what types of metaphors are employed by online news.

In relation to this research, there are various earlier studies on metaphors that explore metaphors, such as those conducted by scholars that discuss metaphors in songs written by Ndaha (2018), Zulaika et al. (2023), Sari (2019), Septiani et al. (2022), Yusuf & Reski Amelia (2018), Nugraheny & Yuwita (2023), Aisyah (2024), Dwi Ayu (2024), with their research only focusing on one song studied, and the results of this study only refer to the meaning described in one song. Other previous studies that are still related to metaphors are also found in songs but not only looking for one song, they look for song albums and look for the meaning of each lyric that has a metaphor written by Zalogo (2022), Fauzi & Wibowo, (2024), Yasmina Frida & Zuraida (2022) The results show 35 words containing metaphors found in 8 song lyrics in the "Folklore" album by Taylor Swift. There are three types of meanings of metaphors, namely, 13 data of structural metaphors (38%), 12 data of orientational metaphors (35%), and 10 data of ontological metaphors (27%). In terms of meaning, denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and affective meaning are found in the song lyrics.

There is also research that examines metaphors in movies written by Shafira Ramadian & Chitra Hasan (2021), Hesy & Hasan, n.d. Akuntansi (2022) The result of this research shows that this research has three types of metaphor there are 8 structural metaphors, 16 orientational metaphors, and 23 ontological metaphors. In conclusion, the dominant metaphor is ontological metaphor because the character of this movie usually compares an object with a human motivation, activities, and characteristic, they also use a human as a container.

Other previous studies that are still related to metaphors are also found in novels written by Padillah et al. (2016), Ganiwati (2020), Damayanti (2019), Irwan & Pujiono (2019) (Meranggi et al., 2022) The results of this study found eight data simile and four data metaphor. The dominant of the two types figurative language is Simile. The aims of this research study is to give a better understanding to analyze the sentence and the meaning of the novel to the public.

Related to this research there is also research that is still related to linguistics, namely examining code-mixing in social media written by Wibowo et al. (2024) The purpose of

this research is focused on two things, namely: Identifying the types and functions of euphemisms found in captions of Folkative Instagram account.

The aim of this study is to explore the use of metaphors in headlines and titles that refer to Palestine. By identifying and analyzing the different types of metaphors used, this research will focus on knowing what types of metaphors Al Jazeera uses in its headlines.

The research questions guiding this study are: What types of metaphors are used in Al Jazeera's headlines referring to Palestine, what are the meanings of these metaphors in the Palestinian context. The benefits of this research will provide valuable insights into what types of metaphors Al Jazeera uses to explain the current state of Palestine. This is significant for us because we cannot allow our brothers and sisters who are present to be massacred in large numbers; this is no longer humane and extremely harsh.

Semantic

Semantics is part of branch of linguistics that studies meaning which includes types, divisions, formation and changes in meaning. According to Mariani, Mu'in Fatchul (2019) Semantics is the study of linguistic meaning; that is, the meaning of words phrase, and sentence Many individuals believe that the definition of a term is the same as its meaning. A little thinking, however, should reveal that meaning must encompass more than just this. Other said. Semantics is concerned with the way natural languages express meanings. Meanings of complex phrases and sentences form compositionally from the meanings of their parts (down to the smallest meaning-bearing units, morphemes Von Fintel & Matthewson (2008). Then from Kreidler (2013) Semantics is the systematic study of meaning, whereas linguistic semantics is the study of how languages structure and communicate meaning. It can be concluded that semantics is the branch of linguistics that studies meaning. Semantics covers how meaning is formed from words, phrases, and sentences, as well as how language expresses and communicates meaning. While some may equate meaning with just the definition of a term, semantics goes beyond that to consider the compositional nature of meaning in language.

Types of metaphor

There are many different types of metaphors. Linguists have attempted to categorize and limit languages to specific numbers. But this study only focus to visual metaphor. A visual metaphor is a metaphor in which the component elements usually labeled theme and vehicle, or goal and source are represented visually Contini (2020). In 'Metaphors We Live By,' Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 show how conceptual metaphors can be applied in a visual context to enrich communication, the book writes that there are three types of structural metaphor, orientational metaphor, and ontological metaphor. To summarize, a visual metaphor is one in which the ingredients are visually portrayed. These metaphors can help to enrich communication.

1. Structural metaphors

The metaphorical use their experience through certain notions, such as: Argument is war. Where we introduce 'debate' into the 'war'. The similarities include a heated dispute between two individuals with opposing viewpoints. They then conclude with a win, defeat, or a truce. All of this is a battlefield. In the daily debate of the talk, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) give the following examples:

I demolished his argument
Your claims are indefensible.
He attacked every weak point of my argument.

These examples use war-related structures such as demolish, indefensible, and attack. The employed structures replace other structures, such as the verb refuted, the adjective unjustified, and the verb reproached or reprimanded.

2. Orientational metaphors

The metaphorical usage of a word with its semantic concepts 'directionality' and 'specialization' organizes metaphors of several concepts in the form of location, as seen in the examples below:

Try to pack more words into fewer words.
Don't force your meanings into the wrong words.
Can you extract coherent ideas from that prose?

The language used here expresses directionality and specialization through abstract terms unrelated to location. The conceptual framework includes all of these words.

3. Ontological metaphors

Metaphors are used to make abstract and intangible concepts, such as intellectual activity, feelings, and ideas, more concrete for the human mind. For example:

We need to combat inflation.

Inflation is viewed as an imperceptible deed that requires combat. Lakoff & Johnson (1980). Metaphors represent the same notion from multiple perspectives and media. They are integrated and overlap each other, describing face-to-face conversation, which is a metaphorical phrase in English. Linguists examine metaphors in several ways, including their verb, circulation, and notion. In the end, linguists arrive at one thing: the metaphor itself.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the use of metaphors in Al Jazeera's headlines referencing Palestine. This research's data source is the title on the Al Jazeera website. The research data is posted on the Al Jazeera website in the form of text with metaphors in the title. Researchers conducted this investigation due to the title's usage of metaphors. Effective data gathering processes are crucial for doing research. Researchers utilized the following strategies to collect data for this study: First, read the titles posted by Al Jazeera, then choose titles that contain metaphors, and then categorize the data based on the type of metaphor.

These headlines were analyzed using the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson to categorize metaphors into structural, orientational, and ontological types. The data were examined descriptively to identify patterns and interpret the meanings embedded in the metaphorical language. The findings were presented in percentages to highlight the prevalence of each type of metaphor by Al Jazeera in its headlines.

Results and Discussion

Data was collected by sourcing all headlines containing metaphors in Al Jazeera. There are 16 data found in Al Jazeera headlines that reference Palestine. All of data will be analyzed in this chapter. The analysis will be apply the theory of conceptual metaphor from Lakoff and Johnson.

No	Types of Metaphor	Amount	Percentages
1	Structural metaphor	3	18.75%
2	Ontological metaphor	5	31.25%
3	Oriental metaphor	8	50.0%
	Amount	16	100%

Data analysis

1. Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphors organize one idea in terms of another, creating a system of relations that helps to understand the concept.

-1. Data/01/SM/29 Dec. The two-state solution: The opium of the Palestinian people

This metaphor frames the two-state solution as an addictive substance (opium), suggesting that it pacifies Palestinians while distracting from practical resistance. The metaphor is structural because it maps the concept of political pacification onto the dynamics of drug addiction, creating a coherent framework to analyze its effects.

-2. Data/02/SM/11 Apr. The solidarity of shared trauma: De-exceptionalising Gaza

This metaphor constructs Gaza's trauma as part of a global narrative of shared suffering. It positions Gaza not as unique but as a representation of a universal experience, structuring the understanding of trauma as a common human condition.

-3. Data/03/SM/20 Jun. An unsustainable refugee crisis

This metaphor structures the refugee crisis in terms of a failing system or mechanism that cannot maintain itself. The crisis is presented as a structure nearing collapse due to long-term neglect.

2. Ontological Metaphors

Ontological metaphors represent abstract concepts as entities or physical objects, allowing them to be understood through tangible forms.

-1. Data/01/ONM/4 Dec. Gaza as a Global Metaphor for Reclaiming Justice

Gaza is conceptualized as an embodiment of global struggles for justice. Justice, an abstract idea, is given physicality and specificity through the symbolic lens of Gaza.

-2. Data/02/ONM/22 Jan. The olive tree, symbol of Palestine and mute victim of Israel's war on Gaza

The olive tree, a tangible object, symbolizes the land, culture, and suffering of Palestine. Its "mute" status conveys the voicelessness of victims under occupation, personifying the tree as a victim of violence.

-3. Data/03/ONM/13 Dec. Palestine's and Turtle Island's liberation are entwined

Liberation movements are metaphorically presented as interconnected threads, giving them a tangible and visual relationship. This metaphor links Indigenous struggles in North America (Turtle Island) with Palestinian liberation.

-4. Data/04/ONM/31 Aug. The fruits of Palestine and their symbolism

Fruits represent the tangible and cultural "yield" of Palestine, symbolizing what is produced or destroyed by the ongoing occupation. The metaphor embodies cultural identity and resistance.

-5. Data/05/ONM/10 Jun. Watching 'Wonder Woman' in Gaza

The act of watching a film in Gaza becomes an ontological metaphor for contrasting global narratives of heroism with the lived experiences of oppression. Gaza becomes a "lens" for viewing these contradictions.

3. Orientational Metaphors

Orientational metaphors use spatial directionality (up/down, inside/outside, etc.) to frame abstract concepts.

-1. Data/01/ORM/1 May. Israel's walled-in approach to nationhood

The metaphor describes Israel's nation-building strategy as physically and ideologically "walled-in," implying isolation and defensiveness. It maps the concept of separation onto the physical imagery of walls.

-2. Data/02/ORM/17 Jan. Gaza will be the grave of the Western-led world order

Gaza is metaphorically positioned as a "grave," implying the death of the Western-dominated political system. This downward orientation signifies decline and collapse.

-3. Data/03/ORM/30 Sep. Behind the walls

"Behind the walls" frames the experience of Palestinians as one of isolation and restriction. The orientation inward (behind) suggests being hidden or trapped.

-4. Data/04/ORM/28 Apr. The myth of the Wild West

This compares the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the "Wild West," which is typically imagined as lawless and chaotic. The metaphor orients the conflict as a myth that distorts reality, positioning the narrative in a lawless "outward" space.

-5. Data/05/ORM/29 Jun. The meaning of occupation

"Meaning" is explored as something hidden and complex within the layers of occupation, positioning it as a depth metaphor requiring excavation or unpacking.

-6. Data/06/ORM/12 Sep. Portrait of an occupation: Human rights of the settler

The "portrait" metaphor suggests a static, curated depiction of the situation, orienting the audience to view occupation as a single, framed picture.

-7. Data/07/ORM/18 Oct. Rethinking Palestine-Israel: Hegemonic security vs true justice

This metaphor juxtaposes the upward dominance of "hegemonic security" with the more grounded and equal orientation of "true justice," contrasting hierarchical control with fairness.

-8. Data/08/ORM/20 Sep. Who is the Great Satan?

This metaphor personifies a conceptual villain as "The Great Satan," positioning it as a higher power or dominating force, creating an upward orientation of evil.

These categories illustrate how metaphors frame abstract or complex issues in relatable and tangible terms, aiding understanding and eliciting emotional or intellectual responses. Each type serves a distinct purpose in shaping the narrative and engaging readers. Based on the calculation results, the use of orientational metaphors has the

highest percentage at 50%, followed by ontological metaphors at 31.25%, and structural metaphors at 18.75%. This shows that orientational metaphors are more dominantly used compared to the other two types of metaphors in the observed data.

Conclusion

This analysis reveals that Al Jazeera uses metaphors in headlines to present complex issues surrounding Palestine in accessible and impactful ways. Three types of metaphors structural, ontological, and orientational each serve unique purposes. Structural metaphors provide frameworks for understanding concepts, such as viewing the two-state solution as "opium," which conveys a perspective on its pacifying effects. Ontological metaphors give abstract ideas, like "justice," a tangible representation through Gaza, making these ideas more relatable and compelling. Orientational metaphors, like "walled-in," use spatial language to highlight isolation, emphasizing political and social separation.

The predominance of orientational metaphors (50%) suggests that spatial language, such as "walls" or "graves," resonates powerfully in conveying the physical and ideological divides that characterize the conflict. Meanwhile, ontological and structural metaphors reinforce the Palestinian narrative of resilience, cultural identity, and global justice, helping audiences better relate to the intangible aspects of struggle and resistance.

References

- Adinda, A., Wibowo, H., & Zarkasih, E. (2021). the Use of Advertisement in Social Media To Enrich Students' Vocabulary. *Lingua*, 17(2), 209-217. doi:10.34005/lingua.v17i2.1681
- Akuntansi, P. S. (2022). ANALISIS METAPHOR PADA RATATOUILLE: PENDEKATAN SEMANTIK. *Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD FKIP Universitas Mandiri*, 20(1), 105-123.
- Banaruee, H., Khoshsima, H., Zare-Behtash, E., Yarahmadzahi, N., & Zhang, L. J. (2019). Types of metaphors and mechanisms of comprehension. *Cogent Education*, 8(1). doi:10.1080/2331186X.2019.1617824
- Contini, B. A. (2020). *M(v)*. 1968, 1-6. doi:10.7413/18258630096
- Damayanti, L. (2019). Analisis Penggunaan Similes dan Metaphors pada Novel Berjudul "Hard Time" sebagai Tulisan Deskriptif. *JSHP: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan*, 3(2), 105-110. doi:10.32487/jshp.v3i2.649
- Feng, D., & O'Halloran, K. (2013). The visual representation of metaphor. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, 11(2), 320-335. doi:10.1075/rcl.11.2.07fen
- Ganiwati, W. S. (2020). Metafora Dalam Novel Laskar Pelangi Karya Andrea Hirata (Analisis Stilistika). *Jurnal Salaka: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya Indonesia*, 2(2), 111-120. doi:10.33751/jsalaka.v2i2.2539
- Hesy, S. Z., & Hasan, D. C. (n.d.). AN ANALYSIS OF METAPHOR USED IN COCO MOVIE.
- Irwan, I., & Pujiono, M. (2019). PERUBAHAN KLASIFIKASI METAFORA PADA NOVEL LASKAR PELANGI KARYA ANDREA HIRATA VERSI BAHASA JEPANG BERDASARKAN FUNGSI KOGNITIFNYA. *Kiryoku*, 3(3), 107. doi:10.14710/kiryoku.v3i3.107-125
- Kennedy, J. M. (1982). Metaphor in pictures. *Perception*, 11(5), 589-605. doi:10.1068/p110589
- Kolbitsch, J., & Maurer, H. (2006). The transformation of the Web: How emerging communities shape the information we consume. *Journal of Universal Computer Science*, 12(2), 187-213.
- Kreidler, C. (2013). Introducing English Semantics. In *Introducing English Semantics*. doi:10.4324/9781315886428
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). We Live By. In *Argument*.
- Mariani, Mu'in Fatchul, and Y. A. A. (2019). 0 BOOK-INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS 2019 ber-ISBN.
- Meranggi, A. T., Santika, D. A. D. M., & JUNIARTHA, W. (2022). Simile and Metaphor in the

- Semantics Study Corresponding Email Article's History Metaphor in The Folklore Album by Taylor Swift: A Semantics Study.* 9(2), 611. doi:10.30605/25409190.473
- Yusuf, F., & Reski Amelia, A. (2018). Metaphor Expression in Fall for You Song Lyrics. *Elite : English and Literature Journal*, 5(1), 35-45. doi:10.24252/elite.v5i1a4
- Zalogo, R. A. (2022). *FAGURU: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Keguruan METAPHOR IN WESTLIFE SONGS LYRIC OF SPECTRUM ALBUM.* 1(2), 286-294. <https://jurnal.uniraya.ac.id/index.php/FAGURU>
- Zulaika, A. Y., Artanti, C., Alivia, C. P., Annisa, D., & Putri, D. M. (2023). Metaphorical Analysis and the Meaning of Song "Another One Bite the Dust" By Queen. *Journal of Linguistics, Literacy, and Pedagogy*, 2(2), 126. doi:10.30870/jllp.v2i2.20292.