

War Metaphors in Health Crises News: The invisible enemy and the white troops

استعارات الحرب في أخبار الأزمات الصحية: العدو الخفي والجنود البيض

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الملخص:

تناولت هذه الدراسة، من خلال تحليل الخطاب المعتمد على المتون اللغوية المحسوبة من منظور معرفي/إدراكي، كيفية توظيف الاستعارات في تناول جائحة كوفيد-19 في الخطاب الإخباري العربي. خلُصت الدراسة إلى أن الصحفيين يستخدمون أساليب خطابية مبتكرة تستهدف التأثير الإدراكي على القراء وذلك من خلال توظيف إطار استعارة الحرب، مع تغيير أدوات القتال والفاعلين لصياغة "عناوين إخبارية مثيرة". كما لوحظ بأن الأفعال التي تعكس استخداماً منظماً ومنهجياً للقوة للسيطرة على الوباء نادراً ما وردت في الخطاب العربي الإخباري عن الجائحة، مقارنةً بالأفعال التي تُثير الخوف أو تُشير إلى استخدام عدواني للقوة للدفاع عن النفس في حرب أو عراك جسدي والتي كانت أكثر استخداماً في الخطاب العربي عن الجائحة. ختاماً، توصي الدراسة الصحفيين، عند ترجمة الأخبار من خطاب أجنبي، باختيار استراتيجيات تحفظية، مثل تحويل الاستعارات إلى تشبيهات، مع مراعاة نشر لغة تبعث على الثقة بدلاً من زيادة الخوف والتوتر في ظل الظروف الصعبة التي فرضتها الجائحة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كوفيد-19، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، ديناميكيات القوة، أخبار الأزمات الصحية، الاستعارات الحربية.

Abstract:

The current paper investigates, through cognitive corpus-based discourse analysis, how meta-phors are used to communicate about the pandemic of Covid-19 in Arabic news discourse. Journalists were found to employ creative discourse practices to cognitively appeal to readers by maintaining the WAR metaphor frame but changing the weaponry and agents to compose 'sensational news headlines'. Verbs that reflect a systematic/organised way of using force and power to control the pandemic were rarely mentioned compared to verbs that evoke fear or suggest an aggressive use of force dynamics to defend oneself in a WAR or physical battling frame. It is recommended that journalists, when translating news from a foreign discourse, choose distancing strategies such as transforming metaphors into similes and take into account spreading a language that gives confidence more than increasing fear and stress in such a difficult time of the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, critical discourse analysis, force-dynamics, health crisis news, war metaphors.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early months of 2020, the pandemic of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) spread worldwide, disrupting the mobility of world trade, flights, business flows, and schooling in most countries worldwide. Press releases and news discourse became the main sources of guidance given to the public to guide them during the pandemic time 2020-2021. Media discourse has always been a source of (mis)representation of social actors and issues¹. In this vein, there was criticism worldwide directed at the news discourse reporting to the public about what is going on, what is required from them, in addition to what is taken or given by their governments and the World Health Organization (see Afrin et al. (2022)² about the US press discourse and Charteris-Black (2021) about the British press discourse)³. However, there is not much research on Arabic discourse reporting on COVID-19 apart from Elyas et al. (2022)⁴ and Lahlali (2023)⁵ which were limited to the textual level of critical discourse analysis. The current study investigates, using a cognitive corpus-based critical discourse analysis (see Charteris-Black, 2021)⁶, what metaphors are central to Arabic news discourse about the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Previous Studies: COVID-19 in media discourse

Newspapers usually try to attract readers through figurative language such as metaphors, sometimes in 'sensational headlines' (Chiluwa, 2022)⁷, to achieve either a communicative goal or grasp more readership⁸. Metaphor is a way of talking about something (TARGET DOMAIN⁹) through the use of attributes of another concept (SOURCE DOMAIN); this process involves a selective conceptual mapping of some of the attributes of the source concept into the language used to describe the target concept, as in ARGUMENT IS WAR, see Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999)¹⁰.

1- Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (London: Routledge, 1991); Marian Meyers, *News Coverage of Violence against Women: Engendering Blame* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997); Elena Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

2- Rifat Afrin et al., "Framing of COVID-19 in Newspapers: A Perspective from the US-Mexico Border," *Healthcare* 10, no. 12 (2022): 2362, <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10122362>

3- Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

4- Tariq Elyas et al., "Politicizing COVID-19 Lingua in Western and Arab Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 36, no. 2 (2022): 869–92, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-022-09933-2>.

5- El Mustapha Lahlali, *Arabic Media Coverage of Pandemics: Discourse, Strategy and Impact* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023).

6- Charteris-Black, *Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?*

7- Innocent Chiluwa, *Discourse, Media, and Conflict: Examining War and Resolution in the News* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

8- Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*; Martin Conboy, *The Language of the News* (London: Routledge, 2013).

9- In cognitive linguistics, the convention is to write the SOURCE and TARGET domains in capital letters to indicate that a linguistic expression belongs to this type of underlying CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR. For instance, in the FIRE → DISEASE metaphor for COVID-19, the virus is portrayed as something that ignites, spreads, or burns uncontrollably, as in Health authorities worked urgently to extinguish the flames of infection.

10- George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*.

For Western politicians, the use of metaphors in public discourse is pervasive¹¹; they use it as a form of social practice, for example, to encourage public perception of their narrative about public issues and ongoing events or crises. In the West, democratic countries faced the dilemma of passing security measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, as these measures may restrict public mobility in a way that will result in major business losses. Semino (2020) was one of the pioneering researchers who discussed how metaphors are central to the way COVID-19 is being talked about¹². She listed a number of metaphors, including referring to the virus as an 'enemy that should be defeated' and as a 'tsunami' on health services.

She discussed why these metaphors spread and why they were important at the beginning of the pandemic, elaborating that they were used to elicit a serious public response to the pandemic. However, while she concluded that WAR metaphors were central to the British discourse about COVID-19, she sought, with other researchers (see Olza et al. 2021)¹³, alternative ways through their initiative #ReframeCovid on the social media platform X(formerly Twitter). After reviewing public responses, it was found that in comparison to the use of WAR metaphors, "fire metaphors are particularly appropriate and versatile in communication about different aspects of the pandemic, including contagion and different public health measures aimed at reducing it" (Semino, 2020, p. 50)¹⁴. The current study explores whether any of these metaphors are central to Arabic media discourse on COVID-19.

Charteris-Black (2021) analysed British press discourse about 'coronaviruses'. His corpus extended from March 2020 to February 2021. He found that the virus was being talked about through the WAR metaphor with lexical choices such as *battle, war, frontline, troops, invisible enemy, kills, and killer*. For example, "the expression 'invisible killer' occurred in 383 news stories in the year from 1st March 2020, as compared with only 52 stories in the preceding year"¹⁵. He concluded that the use of WAR metaphors was favoured in the British public discourse at the beginning of the pandemic because it encouraged a national 'protective response against' a health crisis (the pandemic) that required an immediate national response, despite the fact that it may also evoke the loss of control and fear (ibid). Papamanoli and Kaniklidou (2022)¹⁶ stated that the

New York: Basic Books, 1999.

11- George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Paul Chilton, *Security Metaphors: Cold War Discourse from Containment to Common House* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); Jonathan Charteris-Black, "Britain as a Container: Immigration Metaphors in the 2005 Election Campaign," *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 5 (2006): 563–81; Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple, *News Discourse* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).

12- Elena Semino, "'Not Soldiers but Fire-fighters' – Metaphors and Covid-19," *Health Communication* 36, no. 1 (2021): 50–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1844989>.

13- Inés Olza et al., "The #ReframeCovid Initiative," *Metaphor and the Social World* 11, no. 1 (2021): 98–120, <https://doi.org/10.1075/msw.00013.olz>.

14- Semino, "'Not Soldiers but Fire-fighters' – Metaphors and Covid-19," 50.

15- Charteris-Black, *Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?*, 45.

16- Alexandra-Angeliki Papamanoli and Themis Kaniklidou, "Covid-19 Representations in Political Statements: A Corpus-Based Analysis," in *Pandemic and Crisis Discourse: Communicating COVID-19 and Public Health Strategy*, ed. Andreas Musolff et al. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022),

“use of the WAR metaphor becomes a central discursive tool in the framing process, with a twofold function: First, it provides citizens with a clear mental model for thinking about a nuanced issue, with no permanent solution in sight. Second, it carries emotional valence, which serves in magnifying the citizens’ perception of the threat as well as their fear, which is considered one of the primary functions of war metaphors in political rhetoric”¹⁷ (pp. 50-51), see also Price and Harbisher (2021) and Musolff et al. (2022)¹⁸. The current study aims to explore whether WAR and FIRE metaphors are favoured in Arabic news discourse.

Afrin et al. (2022)¹⁹ discussed how the American press framed COVID-19. They focused on the Rio Grande Valley area at the US-Mexico border. The analysis of press discourse compared local newspapers with national news outlets. They examined keywords, sentiment analysis, and co-occurrences to understand the most recurrent themes in news discourse about COVID-19. The findings revealed that while both reported on health emergencies and measures, their language differed. For example, the sentiment analysis revealed that “reports about fear emotion are more dominant in USA Today, but trust emotion becomes more prevalent in The Monitor news coverage” (p. 1)²⁰. For example, while in USA Today, the top words that suggest positive emotion were ‘*relief, aid, pay, and supply*’, on the other side, ‘*public, shelter, addresses, the mayor, and community*’ were among the top words that suggest positive emotion in The Monitor. As for fear emotion, it was found that The Monitor overused ‘*suspension and emergency*’ in comparison to an overuse of ‘*fight, threat, shortage, quarantine, etc*’ in USA Today²¹. Hence, the COVID-19 pandemic was framed differently in the public discourse of these US newspapers. It is worth noting that the words *fight* and *threat* indicate that COVID-19 is treated like *an enemy in a war*, as we have seen in the British press above (see Charteris-Black, 2021)²².

Elyas et al. (2022)²³ used critical discourse analysis to study how two different newspapers from different socio-cultural contexts framed COVID-19. Their approach was mainly based on van Dijk (1995)²⁴, who gave substantial weight to news headlines as a macro-level discourse structure that can reveal the ideology of the press. Elyas et al. (2022)²⁵ aimed to understand what textual features are used in the front-page COVID-19 headlines in the Saudi newspaper Asharq Alawsat in comparison to Western newspaper USA Today. The analy-

sis concluded that while the “USA Today politicised the pandemic and emphasised that, since China is the source of the virus, blame should be placed on it as well. The newspaper also implied blame on Trump as the president who failed to take the pandemic seriously and protect the nation from its negative consequences. On the other hand, Asharq Alawsat focused on the preventive measures that the Saudi government has taken to face the spread of the virus. Although Iran was blamed for facilitating the entry of infected citizens into the Kingdom, it was not singled out as the source of the outbreak” (pp. 887-888)²⁶. It is worth noting that their study only dealt with two news outlets that operate in different contexts and target drastically different audiences in an attempt to establish a ‘comparison’ between two diverse socio-political contexts. Unlike the limited textual analysis used in Elyas et al.’s study (2022), the current study aims to investigate the metaphors used in Arabic news discourse reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic in seven major Arabic news outlets using a cognitive corpus-based critical discourse analysis, such as that of Charteris-Black (2021)²⁷.

Lahlali (2023)²⁸ in a critical discourse analysis, mainly that of Fairclough (1995), contrasted the BBC Arabic coverage of the pandemic to the coverage given by Aljazeera. His overall corpora were 611,803 tokens/words divided into 378204 tokens from Aljazeera discourse about the pandemic and 233,599 tokens/ words from the BBC Arabic news discourse. His corpora were built by retrieving articles that used the following terms (in Arabic): *COVID-19, corona, coronavirus, Wuhan, social distancing*, and other related words. He used Sketch Engine (a large corpora platform) to extract keywords and understand the common themes in the corpora. Qualitative samples of the data were then analysed. The findings revealed that their discourses were shaped by the socio-cultural and ideological backgrounds of the countries these news outlets operated from. Qatar versus the United Kingdom. Despite the fact that WAR metaphors were found in Lahlali’s (2023) study, his main focus was on the socio-political affiliation of the news discourse produced by each news outlet.

Overall, as seen in previous studies, the use of WAR metaphors in public discourse is central to how the media reports and discusses the pandemic. From the review given above, it can be argued that the WAR metaphor was a ‘discourse metaphor’ that is central to the news discourse reporting about COVID-19 internationally. A discourse metaphor is a “relatively stable metaphorical mappings that function as a key framing device within a particular discourse over a certain period of time” (Zinken, 2008, p. 241)²⁹, see also Semino (2008)³⁰ for more on *discourse metaphor*. The main feature of discourse metaphors is their ability to extend and spread within discourse(s), as they can appear in the form of several

147–164.

17- Papamanoli and Kaniklidou, “Covid-19 Representations in Political Statements”, 50-51.

18- Stuart Price and Ben Harbisher, eds., *Power, Media and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Framing Public Discourse* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021); Andreas Musolff et al., eds., *Pandemic and Crisis Discourse: Communicating COVID-19 and Public Health Strategy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

19- Afrin et al., “Framing of COVID-19 in Newspapers”

20- Afrin et al., 1.

21- Afrin et al., 13.

22- Charteris-Black, *Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?*

23- Elyas et al., “Politicizing COVID-19 Lingua in Western and Arab Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis,”

24- Teun A. van Dijk, “Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis,” in *Language and Peace*, ed. Christina Schäffner and Anita Wenden (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Publishing, 1995), 17–33.

25- Elyas et al., “Politicizing COVID-19 Lingua in Western and Arab Newspapers.”

26- Elyas et al., “Politicizing COVID-19 Lingua in Western and Arab Newspaper, 887-888.

27- Charteris-Black, *Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?*

28- Lahlali, *Arabic Media Coverage of Pandemics: Discourse, Strategy and Impact*.

29- Jörg Zinken, Iina Hellsten, and Brigitte Nerlich, “Discourse Metaphors,” in *Body, Language and Mind*, vol. 2, *Sociocultural Situatedness*, ed. Roslyn M. Frank et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 363–85.

30- Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse*.

related linguistic instances that belong to one central metaphor that is pervasive in public discourse (Otaif, 2024)³¹. It is argued in this paper that a ‘discourse metaphor’ (Zinken, 2008 and Semino, 2008)³², the cognitive total mapping or substitution of particular elements from the source domain (WAR) is driven by local communicative purposes in discourse where metaphors are used sometimes as a ‘discourse practice’ (see Fairclough, 1995)³³ to ‘intensify’, ‘mitigate’ (Wodak, 2001)³⁴, ‘include’ or ‘exclude’ (van Leeuwen, 2008)³⁵ certain socio/political meanings through discourse. For example, the WAR metaphor in a sentence such as *he said, I will not ‘surrender’ and will go to the gym every day* is used to intensify the effort required to get out of his comfort zone and achieve the goal of being physically fit and healthy. The concept of discourse practices refers to the practices of news production and consumption, including how discourse is composed linguistically (Fairclough, 1995)³⁶.

3. Methodology

Unlike recent studies that dealt with Arabic press discourse reporting about COVID-19 through a limited textual lens such as Elyas et al., (2022)³⁷, the current study uses a cognitive critical corpus-based discourse analysis to understand how the Arabic press reported about the pandemic between the 1st of January and 30th of May 2020 which witnessed the peak of the press coverage on COVID-19 pandemic 19 in the Arab world.

The current research is set out to answer the following research questions:

1- *What are the main metaphors used in the reporting about COVID-19 in the Arabic news discourse?*

2- *derived from these metaphor(s)?*

3.1 Data collection and the analytical procedure

The identification of metaphors in discourse usually starts with searching a corpus of a given discourse for metaphorical uses; one of the techniques used is to search through pre-fixed lemmas that are thought to retrieve metaphorical uses (Charteris-Black 2004, 2021; Koller 2006; Otaif 2024)³⁸. However,

this step is usually performed after the analyst familiarises themselves with the corpora, through which they can identify samples for analysis from the discourse under investigation. Pioneer critical discourse analysts such as Fairclough (1995)³⁹ summarised this in the following steps: 1) the analysts should identify a sample of discourse for the analysis (identification stage); 2) interpret their nature; and lastly (interpretation stage) 3) explain how they exemplify a socio-cultural(political) practice that is done through discourse (explanation stage). Having said so, it would be reasonable to say that the criterion of data selection for the analysis should start in the early stages, that is, before compiling the research corpus. News discourse that is disseminated to the public in public platforms is a good source of corpus-based discourse analysis given that the analyst should acknowledge its sources based on the academic conventions (Baker, 2023)⁴⁰. Following Kadiri (2017) and Baker (2023)⁴¹, the data used for analysis in this study are gathered and used in adherence to the well-known conventions of using public data for critical research purposes within the policy of fair use, see BPS (2021a & b)⁴² and the US policies for fair use of a copyrighted work (Copyright Law of the United States, 2016)⁴³.

In the current research, the main criterion was that any news article that included the term *Corona* (in Arabic كورونا) or *COVID-19* (in Arabic كوفيد ١٩) and was published between January 2020 and May 2020 was included in the research corpus which is the peak period of reporting about the spread of COVID-19. Thus, the research corpora did not include articles that are mainly related to previous or recent versions of the coronavirus family, that is, other than COVID-19. In doing so, both representative and authentic samples of the discourse under investigation were retrieved. Therefore, seven of the main and prominent international news outlets reporting to the Arab World, such as AlArabiya and Russia Today, were chosen: AlArabiya -Arabic (AA), BBC Arabic (BBC-A), Russia Today Arabic (RT-A), Sky News Arabic (SN-A), Reuters Arabic (Re-A), Euro News Arabic (EuN-A), and CNN Arabic (CNN-A). In June 2020, using the term *Corona/COVID-19*, fifteen to eighteen articles were manually retrieved and compiled from the websites of each news outlet, whichever was available by that time. The articles of each news outlet were compiled in a separate news corpus and classified, as given in Table 1 below.

31- Fahad A. Otaif, “Doing News Coverage Through Scripture: A Critical Analysis of Intertextuality and Metaphors in Media Discourse,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 12 (2024): 3947–3958.

32- Zinken, et al., “Discourse Metaphors”; Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse*.

33- Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman, 1995).

34- Ruth Wodak, “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 63–94.

35- Theo van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

36- Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 1995.

37- Elyas et al., “Politicizing COVID-19 Lingua in Western and Arab Newspapers.”

38- Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).; Charteris-Black, *Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?*, 2021; Veronika Koller, “Of Critical Importance: Using Electronic Text Corpora to Study Metaphor in Business Media Discourse,” in *Corpus-Based Approaches to Metaphor and Metonymy*, ed. Anatol Stefanowitsch and Stefan Th. Gries (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 237–66; Otaif, “Doing News Coverage Through Scripture”, 2024.

39- Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 1995

40- Paul Baker, *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2023)

41- Kadiri, Bilal. “A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Construction of Identities in the BBC Sitcom Citizen Khan.” PhD diss., Lancaster University, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.17635/lancaster/thesis/90>; Baker, *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*, 2023.

42- British Psychological Society (BPSa), *Ethics Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research* (Leicester: British Psychological Society, 2021), <https://www.bps.org.uk/guideline/ethics-guidelines-internet-mediated-research>; British Psychological Society (BPSb), *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (Leicester: British Psychological Society, 2021), <https://www.bps.org.uk/guideline/code-ethics-and-conduct>.

43- U.S. Copyright Office, *Copyright Law of the United States and Related Laws Contained in Title 17 of the United States Code* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016).

Table 1

The Coronavirus Arabic News Corpora (CAN)

News Agency	AA	BBC-A	CNN-A	EuN-A
Articles	١8	15	١8	15
Corpora size in tokens/words	٥٤٥٢	٧٦٧١	٤٠١٨	٧٨٨٣
News Agency	Re-A	RT-A	SN-A	Total
Articles	15	15	15	111
Corpora size in tokens/words	٥٩١٣	٣٨٥١	٤١٣٦	38924

The software used in this corpus-based analysis was Word-smith Tools version 8 which is a reliable software that has been widely used in corpus-based research. Using the Word-smith Tool, each corpus was compiled in a separate file and analysed both individually and collectively along with the whole news corpora. After building the corpora, the first analytical step was to identify which Arabic translation of the virus name was lexically preferred in the research corpora. It was found that the Arabic transliteration of the English word *corona* as كورونا was more preferred than the term *COVID-19* (كوفيد ١٩). This is similar to what Haddad and Montero-Martinez (2020)⁴⁴ found in their corpus-based study of news discourse using the two terms.

The overall corpora were named the Coronavirus Arabic News (CAN) corpora which contains 38924 tokens/words with 493 uses of the term *Corona* in Arabic as كورونا compared to only 64 uses of *COVID-19* (كوفيد ١٩) in the CAN corpora. The individual hits of the terms ‘Corona’ and ‘COVID-19’ in Arabic in each sub-corpus are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Coronavirus versus COVID-19 in the CAN corpora

News Agency	Corona- hits كورونا	Covid-19 hits كوفيد ١٩
	korona	Kofid19
AA	82	11
BBC-A	72	5
CNN-A	73	6
EuN-A	51	25
Re-A	45	3
RT-A	63	5
SN-A	53	9
Totals	493	64

Since the focus of this study is to find out what metaphors are central to the textual news discourse reporting about COVID-19 in Arabic, visual(multimodal) content was beyond the scope/confines of the analysis of this paper. Nevertheless, it was always consulted during the interpretation and explanation stages. Although there is consensus among corpus linguists that significant collates occur within four words on each side of the node under investigation (Stubbs, 2001)⁴⁵, which is here *Corona* written in Arabic as كورونا, in some cases, it is better to extend this span, especially when analysing a small

44- Amal H. Haddad and Silvia Montero-Martinez, “COVID-19: A Metaphor-Based Neologism and Its Translation into Arabic,” JCOM: Journal of Science Communication 19, no. 5 (2020): A01, <https://doi.org/10.22323/2.19050201>

45- Michael Stubbs, Words and Phrases: Corpus Studies of Lexical Semantics (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001)

corpus (Otaif, 2019)⁴⁶ such as the current CAN corpora of Arabic news discourse about COVID-19. Otaif (2019) found that this step allowed researchers to explore prominent concepts and words that co-occur or lexically associate the lexical node under investigation beyond the limited 4-word span, yet appear with a statistical level of significance. Therefore, for any collocate to be included in the analysis, it should meet the following criteria: MI ≥ 3, F ≥ 5, and LL ≥ 15.3, which are reliable statistical measures that have been previously examined and used in several corpus-based discourse analysis research, see Al-Hejin (2012) and Otaif (2019)⁴⁷.

After identifying that *corona* (كورونا) was the preferred Arabic translation of the virus name in the CAN corpora, the analysis moved to identifying the overused words that significantly collocated with the term *corona* (كورونا) in the whole Arabic news discourse⁴⁸. Then, through further textual analysis, the lemmas that significantly collocated with *corona* (كورونا) and exhibited a metaphorical meaning were identified. After identifying these statistically significant collocates, their pragmatic meanings were interpreted according to their contexts of occurrence. Lastly, their possible use as part of a macro-level socio-cultural practice was explained by utilising cognitive linguistics analytical concepts of ‘conceptual metaphors’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)⁴⁹ and force-dynamic schemas of lexical concepts (see Talmy, 2000)⁵⁰ to explain the found central metaphors and their linguistic instantiations. It is also worth noting here that the reported data were translated into English by the researcher and subsequently proofread by two professional translators⁵¹.

4. Findings and discussion

The top 15 significant collocates that were found to co-occur with the term *Corona in Arabic* كورونا are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3

The top *corona* (كورونا) collocates in the CAN corpora

No	Arabic	equiva-’ English ‘lent	.Freq	Texts	MI	.Log L
1	فيروس fayroos	virus	226	94	6.40	2103.77

46- Fahad A. Otaif, “Semantic Associations, Epistemic Priming, and Cognitive Mechanisms in Media Discourse” (PhD diss., Bangor University, 2019).

47- Al-Hejin, “Covering Muslim Women: A Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis of the BBC and Arab News” (PhD diss., Lancaster University, 2012); Otaif, “Semantic Associations, Epistemic Priming, and Cognitive Mechanisms in Media Discourse”, 2019.

48- Collocates that mainly co-occur with the term were calculated because calculating collocates is more efficient than calculating keywords, which require reference corpora and are usually affected by any variances related to the different sizes of each sub-CAN corpus.

49- Lakoff and Johnson. Metaphors We Live By, 1980.

50- Leonard Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

51- The translated examples were always checked to see if they had been composed based on press releases and news stories originally produced in English. In such cases, the original form was consulted; for example, the US president’s speeches on COVID-19.

2	المستجد <i>almustajid</i>	the novel/ new	72	42	6.31	571.40
3	بفيروس <i>bfayroos</i>	with the virus	58	36	6.37	488.83
4	ضد <i>died</i>	against	66	33	5.83	312.76
5	الحرب <i>alharb</i>	the war	84	23	5.31	235.71
6	تفشي <i>tafashi</i>	outbreak	65	24	5.30	180.16
7	بسبب <i>bisabab</i>	because	56	19	5.52	192.35
8	حالة <i>(Hala/h/t)</i>	case	103	17	4.68	153.74
9	عدد <i>adad</i>	number	95	15	4.70	144.63
10	حرب <i>harb</i>	war	36	18	5.64	139.34
11	المتحدة <i>(Almutahida/h/t)</i>	united	122	19	4.39	135.03
12	وباء <i>'waba</i>	pandemic	39	16	5.52	134.47
13	الصين <i>alsieen</i>	China	90	15	4.68	133.44
14	قد <i>gad</i>	it may	68	14	4.72	104.89
15	النشر <i>alnashr</i>	publication	15	13	6.21	104.33

The findings in Table 3 show that the Arabic term for war, حرب, was the top 5th statistically significant collocate in the CAN corpora. When looking at how significant this collocate was in each sub-corpus, it was usually among the top 10 significant collocates in each sub-corpus (see Table 4).

Table 4

War versus battle in the CAN Corpora as a significant collocate in each corpus

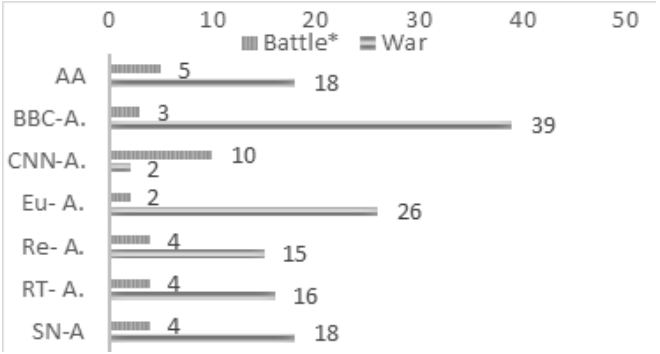
News Agency	الحرب War <i>alharb</i>	المعركة Battle <i>(Almaerakah/t)</i>
AA	10 th	NA
BBC-A	10 th	NA
CNN-A	0	18 th
EuN-A	7 th	NA
Re-A	10 th	NA
RT-A	9 th	NA
SN-A	6 th	NA

The statistical values of the most important collocates that significantly associate the Arabic word كورونا 'corona' show that

the WAR metaphor is central to the Arabic media discourse reporting about the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, CNN-A was the only news corpus that did not have the term war as a significant كورونا 'corona' collocate, however, battle appeared as the 18th top corona collocate in the CNN-A discourse. Further enquiry into the use of war lemmas inside the CAN corpora revealed that war was more widely used than battle in the Arabic discourse of each news agency, except in that of CNN-A, see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1

Hits of War* versus battle* in the CAN corpora



It is worth noting here that the Raw Frequencies (RF, henceforth) were always preferred because (1) the Normalised Frequencies (NF) were found to overstate the number of uses as it is dependent on the size of each corpus⁵² and (2) the goal at this stage is to collect further examples of how the statistically significant linguistic instantiations of the WAR metaphor appeared in different linguistic patterns and instantiations (RQ.2) in Arabic news discourse. In this vein, Figure 1 clearly shows that while war lemma was lexically favoured in six out of seven of the news outlets reporting in Arabic, CNN Arabic avoided using the lemma war* and favoured battle* instead, with an RF=10 in comparison to only two uses of war in its corpus. Therefore, this further confirms that the WAR metaphor is central and significant to news discourse reporting on COVID-19 in Arabic. If this is the case, then its conceptual mappings in news discourse should follow the sub-conceptual mappings given in Table 5.

Table 5

The sub-conceptual mappings of the WAR metaphor into the treatment of COVID-19

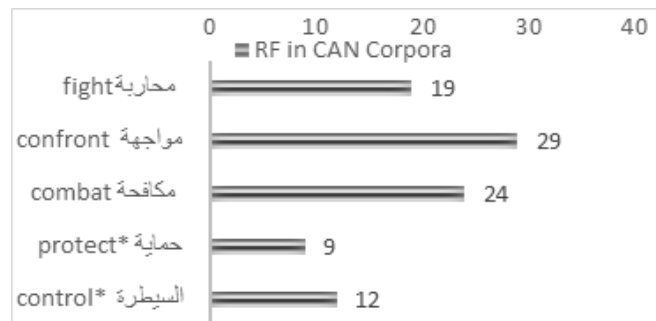
Source domain: WAR	Target Domain: PANDEMIC
FIGHTING IN A WAR	CONTROLLING COVID-19
WEAPONS	MEASURES TAKEN TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS
TROOPS	HEALTH PRACTITIONERS AND EXPERTS
:PARTICIPANTS attacker/defendant/ winner/ loser	:PARTICIPANTS COVID-19, governments including .politicians and health practitioners
:CONSEQUENCES win or loss with countless injuries, attacks, destruction, and deaths	:CONSEQUENCES Stop the spread of the virus or lose control with more infections, mortality rates and deaths

52- This is a common problem in corpus-based analyses, as noted in previous research, see Otaif (2019).

Otaif (2015)⁵³ found that metaphors that appear at the macro-level of the discourse structure, such as news headlines and/or found as significant keywords or collocates within a given news discourse, appear in different linguistic forms/patterns and instantiations inside the discourse. In this vein, a recurrent use of verbs and nouns from the WAR domain in the news discourse to talk about COVID-19 was found. First, searching the concordance lines of the CAN corpora revealed the use of several nouns that are derived from action verbs (verbal nouns) such as *مواجهة* (*combat*), *مكافحة* (*fight*) and *مكافحة* (*confront*), *السيطرة* (*control*), and *حماية* (*protect*), see Figure 2.

Figure 2

Verbal nouns that denote actions taken towards COVID-19



Some verbal nouns were found to denote actions taken against COVID-19. First, *مواجهة* pronounced as ‘*muajahat*’ which means in English *confront(ing)* (RF=29), followed by ‘*mukafahat*’ *مكافحة* which means in English *combat(ing)* (RF=24). Then ‘*muharabat*’ *محاربة* (RF=19), which means in English *fight*(ing)* followed by ‘*alsaytarat*’ *السيطرة* (RF=12), which means in English *control* and lastly ‘*himayat*’ *حماية* (RF=9), which means in English *protect(ing)*⁵⁴.

The verbal nouns ‘*muajahat*=*confront**’ (RF=29) and ‘*mukafahat*=*combat**’ (RF=24) i.e. which both mean in Arabic the use of physical force to defend one’s self from a possible danger i.e. (PHYSICAL FIGHTS/BATTLES), together along with ‘*muharabat*’ *محاربة* (RF=19) i.e. which means in Arabic the use of force to defend one’s self from a possible attack in a war/battle were pervasive in the corpora in comparison to the use of ‘*alsaytarat*=*control**’ (RF=12) and ‘*himayat*=*protect**’ (RF=9). The latter two come from a systematic understanding and use of ‘force dynamics’ (Talmy, 2000)⁵⁵ to manage a situation, including the humans/ participants involved in it.

In fact, unlike the former verbal nouns (*confront*, *combat*, and *fight*) which are recurrently used in the discourse of violence, the latter ones (*control* and *protect*) are famously used in medical contexts in phrases such as *infection control* and *children protection*. The word ‘*Control*’ also reflects confidence in the use of power to encounter a problem. Therefore, the WAR/

53- Fahad A. Otaif, “Metaphorical Framing of Media Discourse and the Representation of the Other: A Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Analysis of Metaphors in the Press Discourse,” King Khalid University Journal of Humanities 24, no. 3 (2015): 163–192.

54- The root/lemma under query and its variants have always been used to retrieve all linguistic derivations (nouns, adjectives and verbs) and uses of a particular lexical concept within the CAN corpora.

55- Talmy, Toward a Cognitive Semantics, 2000.

BATTLE metaphor seems not only central but also pervasive and appears in different linguistic instantiations in the Arabic discourse reporting on COVID-19. For examples of their uses in the CAN corpora, see Figures 3-7 below.

Figure 3

Mentions of the lemma *muajahat** i.e. *confront** (RF=29) in the CAN corpora

Concordance	File
1 نكافح الفيروس... فباعتني هي أنه يجب دعم منظمة الصحة العالمية أو أي منظمة إنسانية أخرى	\\A-3.txt
2 مكافحة فيروس كورونا المستجد، "كوفيد-19" بعد حالة رابدة مساء السبت قراراً جديداً ضمن إجراءات	\\SNA.13.txt
3 يكافحون بشدة ضد فيروس كورونا وأضاف أن تصنيع الكثير منها، وسيساعدونهم بطرق أخرى، أنهم	\\RE.A.15.txt
4 مكافحة كورونا بفعالية دون عودة كامل أراضيها سوريا نمنع زوبدها بالولايات الطبية مشيراً إلى تعذر	\\RT.A.4.txt
5 مكافحة كورونا في سوريا ٢٠٠٠ تاريخ توسكو العقوبات الأحادية تعزل	\\RT.A.4.txt
6 مكافحة وياه، كوفيد-19 مشيراً إلى أن المبلغ المتبرع، التلثة أنه سيتبرع بمبلغ مليار دولار لدعم جهود	\\SNA.5.txt
7 مكافحة الإرهاب ٢٠٠٠ من الممكن أن تكسب بعض جمع بيانات التفرقات والهجرة ووسعت صلاحيات	\\RE.A.4.txt
8 مكافحة فيروس كورونا في البيت الأبيض إنه يعتقد دونالد ترامب خلال الإجابة الإعلامية لقوة عمل	\\CNN-A.12.txt
9 نكافح وباء فيروس كورونا ٢٠٠٠ وكتب ترامب يقول والإكوادور وهندوراس والسلفادور لدعمها في	\\RE.A.15.txt
10 مكافحة فيروس كورونا ٢٠٠٠ وفي حوار صحفي بثته بيرو لمساعدة الشركات والموظفين والعمل في	\\EU-A.1.txt
11 مكافحة، كوفيد-19 وأود أن أشير إلى أنني المعنية يطلب منع استثناءات إنسانية لاستغلالها في	\\RT.A.4.txt

Figure 4

Mentions of the lemma *mukafahat** i.e. *com-bat** (RF=26)

Concordance	File
2 نكافح في العراق ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة سينشوان نكافح في شينغهاي نكافح في إيران ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة جواندونغ	\\A-A.6.txt
3 نكافح في تونس ٢٠٠٠ وأطلقت الصين شعاراً جالماً جيانسو نكافح في باكستان ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة جيانشي	\\A-A.6.txt
4 نكافح في إيران ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة جواندونغ نكافح في مكافحة فيروس كورونا كالتالي ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة شينغهاي	\\A-A.6.txt
5 نكافح في إيطاليا ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة جيانسو نكافح في جواندونغ نكافح في العراق ٢٠٠٠ مقاطعة سينشوان	\\A-A.6.txt
6 نكافح لتعويض وتخرج من هذه المعركة، ٢٠٠٠ فائراً ٢٠٠٠ الحرب ٢٠٠٠ وفي الحرب نقلت لتعويض، أما هنا فليكن أن	\\A-A.2.txt
7 محاربة فيروس كورونا الجديد يعتبر بمثابة حرب ضد بالنسبة للأطفال فإن ٢٠٠٠ IMAGES مصدر GETTY الصورة	\\BBC-A.3.txt
8 محاربة فيروس كورونا هي الخروج وتعليم، "الفاغلا لا" أريد أن أجلس وأراقب ما يحصل ٢٠٠٠ طريقي في	\\EU-A.2.txt
9 أبقوا في المنزل وانتظروا ٢٠٠٠ ١٩ محاربة كوفيد الوقت المناسب للمس ٢٠٠٠ يمكن للجميع المساعدة في	\\SNA.2.txt
10 محاربة الفيروس ٢٠٠٠ في ريو يقول البرازيلي نكافح حالات شمال بيرو أنه يعمل "مثل الأطباء على جبهة	\\EU-A.2.txt
11 محاربة فيروس كورونا بالحرب ٢٠٠٠ وكان الرئيس والإعلاميين والخبراء الأمريكيين أن شبهوا جهود	\\RT.A.2.txt
12 محاربة التهديدات مثل الأوبئة التي يمكن أن تكون إن هواجس الناس بشأن الخصوصية جعلت من الصعب	\\RE.A.4.txt
13 محاربة توظيف أحدث الممارسات المبينة على أدلة والتدخل بين المجتمعات في ظل العولمة وقد تتطلب	\\BBC-A.8.txt

Figure 5

Mentions of the lemma *muharabat** i.e. *fight** (RF=19)

Concordance	File
1 السيطرة على الأمراض ٢٠٠٠ يقول الدكتور كوليك بالمئة من استشارة الطبيب ٢٠٠٠ المصدر مراكز ١٩	\\EU-A.15.txt
2 السيطرة على الجائحة في بلد يسجل أدنى معدلات تطوع كثرات من اختصاصات مختلفة للمساعدة في	\\EU-A.11.txt
3 السيطرة على الأمراض إدارة، شكاغو للصحة في شكاغو كانت من أصل إفريقي ٢٠٠٠ المصدر مركز	\\EU-A.15.txt
4 السيطرة على انتشار الفيروس الذي أودى بحياة التابعة لهيئة الخدمات الصحية البريطانية في	\\RT.A.6.txt
5 السيطرة على الفيروس ٢٠٠٠ وحذر كارل دولان من منع انتشار معلومات مضللة يمكن أن تعطل جهود	\\RE.A.4.txt
6 السيطرة على الأمراض ٢٠٠٠ ويمكن أن تساعد البيانات المصنفة حسب الجنس لم نستجج مراكز	\\CNN-A.10.txt
7 السيطرة على الأعداد التي ازدادت مؤخراً كمركز وتحويلها إلى مراكز حجر للمصابين من أجل	\\A-A.15.txt
8 السيطرة على الأعداد التي ازدادت مؤخراً كمركز وتحويلها إلى مراكز حجر للمصابين من أجل	\\AA.16.txt
9 السيطرة على الأمراض والوقاية منها نخض الناس انتشار فيروس كورونا المستجد ٢٠٠٠ وقال إن "مراكز	\\A-A.7.txt
10 السيطرة فائراً لا نستوردها من الخارج ٢٠٠٠ لكن عندما تكون لدينا معدلات إصابة داخل الدولة تحت	\\BBC-A.6.txt
11 التحكم به بطرق، "إداعية فيروس كورونا ما بين لتقييم الأولويات وإعادة ترتيبها والتركيز على ما يمكن	\\BBC-A.4.txt

Figure 6

Mentions of the lemma *alsaytarat** i.e. *control** (RF=12)

Concordance	File
1 تحمي صحتنا النفسية في ظل نقشي الوفاء؟ ٢٠٠٠ بروس: كورونا "كيف	\\BBC-A.4.txt
2 حماية الضعفاء ٢٠٠٠ تواجه هذا المرض، معاً وأود أشكر كل من يبقى منك في منزله ويساعد بذلك في	\\RT.A.1.txt
3 حماية وظائف المواطنين الأمريكيين، "العظماء ٢٠٠٠ لكن لوصف فيروس كورونا قائلاً إن الإجراء الجديد "يستهدف	\\BBC-A.10.txt
4 حماية الإنسانية عرباً ويهوداً وتتوجه إلى المحرضين لهذه العريضة نحن" العرب رأس الحرية قلنا إن هدفنا	\\EU-A.5.txt
5 حماية أخرى غير الكمامة والسائل المطهر ٢٠٠٠ وبين عمليات التنظيف والتعقيم ومعظم الوقت من دون	\\EU-A.2.txt
6 حماية الشركات الفرنسية، "الكبرى ٢٠٠٠ وكانت الحكومة استخدام كل الوسائل التي وضعت بتصرف من أجل	\\EU-A.1.txt
7 حماية الشركات الفرنسية المهددة من قبل فيروس للجوء إلى كل الوسائل بما فيها تأميم "شركات من أجل	\\EU-A.1.txt
8 حماية الحياة: البيرة أسواق الحيوانات الحية الخاضعة أسواق الأطعمة ٢٠٠٠ وفي الأسبوع الماضي قالت جمعية	\\RT.A.10.txt
9 حماية الصحة العامة والحد من انتشار المرض قائمة قوانين وأصدرت أوامر واجبة الفناء ٢٠٠٠ وتتصدر ندائير	\\RE.A.4.txt

Figure 7

Mentions of the lemma *Himayat** i.e. *protect** (RF=9)

Concordance	File
1 تحمي صحتنا النفسية في ظل نقشي الوفاء؟ ٢٠٠٠ بروس: كورونا "كيف	\\BBC-A.4.txt
2 حماية الضعفاء ٢٠٠٠ تواجه هذا المرض، معاً وأود أشكر كل من يبقى منك في منزله ويساعد بذلك في	\\RT.A.1.txt
3 حماية وظائف المواطنين الأمريكيين، "العظماء ٢٠٠٠ لكن لوصف فيروس كورونا قائلاً إن الإجراء الجديد "يستهدف	\\BBC-A.10.txt
4 حماية الإنسانية عرباً ويهوداً وتتوجه إلى المحرضين لهذه العريضة نحن" العرب رأس الحرية قلنا إن هدفنا	\\EU-A.5.txt
5 حماية أخرى غير الكمامة والسائل المطهر ٢٠٠٠ وبين عمليات التنظيف والتعقيم ومعظم الوقت من دون	\\EU-A.2.txt
6 حماية الشركات الفرنسية، "الكبرى ٢٠٠٠ وكانت الحكومة استخدام كل الوسائل التي وضعت بتصرف من أجل	\\EU-A.1.txt
7 حماية الشركات الفرنسية المهددة من قبل فيروس للجوء إلى كل الوسائل بما فيها تأميم "شركات من أجل	\\EU-A.1.txt
8 حماية الحياة: البيرة أسواق الحيوانات الحية الخاضعة أسواق الأطعمة ٢٠٠٠ وفي الأسبوع الماضي قالت جمعية	\\RT.A.10.txt
9 حماية الصحة العامة والحد من انتشار المرض قائمة قوانين وأصدرت أوامر واجبة الفناء ٢٠٠٠ وتتصدر ندائير	\\RE.A.4.txt

Similar to Afrin et al.'s (2022)⁵⁶ study, which documented the use of the words fight and threat in the news discourse of USA Today about COVID-19, words that reflect the extreme use of power in fear of the consequences of losing the 'war' (confront, combat, and fight) were found to be more frequent in the CAN corpora than words that reflect confidence in the use of power (control and protect).

On the other hand, similar to the discussion given above, exploring the corpora for words that are related to actions in the WAR metaphor process revealed the use of words that suggest the use of extreme forces, such as attack. Attack* and destroy* were found in the CAN corpora; these words describe the actions taken by 'the enemy' (the Coronavirus) against the defendants/humans. First, the word 'hujum' هجوم which means in English attack* appeared in the CAN corpora thirteen times (RF=13); most of the references compared the consequences of military attack(s) to those caused by the spread of COVID-19 (RF=9) which documents a linguistic instantiation of the conceptual metaphorical mapping (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; 1999)⁵⁷ of the consequences of loss in a war (source domain) to those caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 (target domain), see Table 5 above. Other occurrences of 'hujum' هجوم included a cyber-attack on the UAE market (RF=1) and four uses (RF=4) which were directly about the 'attacks' of/on COVID-19, as in the following phrases (see Table 6 below).

Table 6

Occurrences of هجوم hujum, i.e. Attack in the CAN corpora

No	Linguistics example	Source
1	:Arabic Phrase وأضاف - دونالد ترمب- "إنها أسوأ من مركز التجارة العالمي" في إشارة إلى اعتداءات ١١ أيلول/سبتمبر ٢٠٠١ التي خلفت نحو ثلاثة آلاف قتيل. وتابع "لم يسبق أن حصل هجوم مماثل." English Translation: He [Donald Trump] added, "It's worse than the World Trade Center," referring to the attacks of September 11, 2001, which left about three thousand people dead. "He continued, "There has never been a similar attack before	Eu-A-3
2	أعلنت الحكومة "حرباً ضد الفيروس"، في رسالة تُذكر بحرب فيتنام ودعا رئيس الوزراء، نغوين شوان فوك، الشعب إلى دعم "هجوم الربيع في حرب طويلة"، في إشارة واضحة إلى الهجوم العسكري الناجح ضد القوات الأمريكية في أوائل عام ١٩٧٥. English Translation: The government declared a "war against the virus," in a letter that recalls the Vietnam War, Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc called on the people to support the "spring attack in a long war," in an apparent reference to the successful military attack against American forces in early 1975	BBC-A-3
3	وتحدث ترامب في تغريدة نشرها على حسابه على موقع تويتر عن "هجوم من عدو خفي"، وهي المقولة التي يرددتها الرئيس الأمريكي لوصف فيروس كورونا... English Translation: In a tweet posted on his Twitter account, Trump spoke of an "Attack from an invisible enemy," which is the saying that the American president repeats to describe the Coronavirus	BBC-A-10
4	في هذا الشأن، يقول مارك آر. ويلسون، أستاذ التاريخ في جامعة نورث كارولينا: "إن يؤدي إقدامنا على 'شن حرب' ضد وباء كورونا، إلى حل المشكلات الجوهرية التي يعاني منها قطاع الرعاية الصحية، على سبيل المثال. إذ أن تفكيرنا في تعبئة الموارد على المدى القصير، مثلما يحدث في الحروب، يؤدي إلى تقيد مخيلتنا وقدرتنا على التفكير. ويعود ذلك إلى أنه لا يمكن من خلال 'شن هجوم سريع'، على فيروس كوفيد - ١٩، الوصول إلى حلول شافية لمشكلات عالمية خطيرة ..." English Translation: In this regard, Mark R. Wilson, professor of history at the University of North Carolina: "Waging a war against the Corona epidemic will not solve the fundamental problems in the health care sector, for example. Our thinking is about mobilizing resources in the short term, as is happening in Wars limits our imagination and our ability to think. This is because, by "launching a quick attack" on the Covid-19 virus, it is not possible to reach satisfactory solutions to serious ...global problems	BBC-A-13

56- Afrin et al., "Framing of COVID-19 in Newspapers".
57- Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By; Lakoff, and Johnson. Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought.

The examples above suggest that the use of the WAR metaphor was mainly driven by journalists' practice of translating Western news literally, where they report the views of international decision-makers. This leads to the question of whether the spread of the WAR metaphor in Arabic discourse was driven by the Western international discourse that was found to favour WAR metaphors in framing COVID-19, as we have discussed earlier in the British and US (Semino, 2020; Charteris-Black, 2021; Afrin et al., 2022)⁵⁸ press discourse. Examples 1-3 in Table 6 above show how politicians use language as a socio-political practice to 'intensify' (Wodak, 2001)⁵⁹ the message and get the desired national public response through the WAR metaphor. This is similar to Papamanoli and Kaniklidou's (2022)⁶⁰ emphasis that the use of the WAR metaphor is a discursive tool in framing issues in public discourse with two main functions: (1) it provides citizens with a way of thinking and perceiving the crisis/issue that does not have an apparent solution yet, and (2) it triggers a magnified emotional response that encourages the public perception of the threat and its fear.

Second, the verb 'damaar' دمر which means in English destroy* and its derivations appeared in the CAN corpora only four times (RF=5); most of the references were about the destructions caused by COVID-19 19 as follows: (1) the pandemic destroys the neighbour (Eu-A 15), (2) the outbreak of coronavirus may lead to the destruction of up to 25 million jobs (Re-A 13), (3) Corona is destroying airlines...Virgin Atlantic is for sale (AA-18), (4) Coronavirus "destroys" Google's hopes of building a smart city in Toronto, and the last example (5) the health facilities were destroyed in many places because of years of war (BBC-A 5), see also Line 3 in

Figure 8 below

Mentions of the lemma yodamir*/yohattiem* يدمر/يحطم i.e. destroy (RF=5)

Concordance	File
1 يدمر شركات الطيران فيرجن أتلانتك للبيع "كورونا يربو" AA.18.txt	AA.18.txt
2 "يحطم" آمال غوغل ببناء مدينة ذكية في نيويورك "كورونا يربو" BBC-A.11.txt	BBC-A.11.txt
3 دمر في أماكن أخرى بسبب سنوات من الحرب في اليمن، بوسوريا، وليبيا ولم تكن أبداً، قوة كما BBC-A.5.txt	BBC-A.5.txt
4 يدمر الحشيش يقول القس مارشال هاتش من شيكاغو الأمريكيون السود أكثر عرضة للخطر من غيرهم "الوباء" EU-A.15.txt	EU-A.15.txt
5 مليون وظيفة "عامل يقوم 25 يدمر ما يصل إلى شهرين منظمة العمل الدولية نفشي فيروس كورونا قد REA.11.txt	REA.11.txt

On the other hand, the parties involved in this 'WAR AGAINST THE VIRUS' were found to be described in this life-saving battle as frontline(s) rows (F=8) الجبهة/ الصفوف (F=4) which are metaphor-ic expressions used to refer to the doctors and nurses facing an 'enemy' (RF=11) who is 'invisible' (RF=2), 'hidden' (RF=3), arch-foe (RF=2) for all humanity (RF=4).

It is surprising here that the mentions of COVID-19 as an active agent who -kills يقتل (F=13), destroy يدمر (F=3), attacks يهاجم (RF=15) and finishes يفتك بحدية (F=4) out- 58- Semino, "Not Soldiers but Fire-fighters" – Metaphors and Covid-19,"; Charteris-Black, Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?; Afrin et al., "Framing of COVID-19 in Newspapers".
59- Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach," in Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, ed.
60- Papamanoli and Kaniklidou, "Covid-19 Representations in Political Statements".

number the efforts done by ‘the white army’ – the unknown soldiers مجهولون (F=2) who stands (F=1) in the battle’s front(lines) في الصفوف الأمامية (F=8) working يعملون (F=3) and dying يموتون (F=4) unseen في الخفاء (F=1), see Figure 9 below for mentions of front(lines) and the white army (F=1) (Line 8, in Arabic.

Figure 9

Mentions of the lemma aljabha(t/h)/ alsofoof alamamiceah* الجبهة i.e. front(lines) (RF=8)

N	Concordance	File
1	الأممية. للمعركة وتعتبر الطماء بمثابة الجبهات* توصف عناصر الرعاية الصحية بأنهم يقفون على الخطوط	\\BBC-A.13.txt
2	الأممية. في مواجهة هذا الوباء من مستشفى جنينان الطراح* يبدأ حساب بذيرة أطباء يعملون بالصفوف	\\BBC-A.3.txt
3	الأممية. لمواجهة كورونا* يعني وزير الصحة الكويتي فداء أول طبيب مصري بالكويت خلال عمله في الصفوف	\\CNN-A.16.txt
4	الأممية. لمواجهة الوباء* وكذب وزير الصحة الكويتي حياته جراء إصابته بفيروس كورونا خلال عمله بالصفوف	\\CNN-A.16.txt
5	الأممية. لمكافحة فيروس كورونا بدولة الكويت* 21 "مخبر" قالا إنه أول طبيب يلقى ربه في الصفوف	\\CNN-A.16.txt
6	الأممية. تعزف على خط الدفاع الثاني في الحرب ضد الطواقم الطبية الجبهة	\\EU-A.2.txt
7	الأممية. في المعركة ضد فيروس كورونا في إجراء تم هؤلاء الأشخاص ك "شهداء" بعد أن نوقشوا في الصفوف	\\RTA.15.txt
8	الأممية. المعركة ضد فيروس كورونا* أطباء كورونا* إليهم الجيش الأبيض الذي يحوض في الصفوف	\\SNA.7.txt

Surprisingly, in the whole CAN corpora, the health practitioners were not described as ‘heroes’ (RF=0) at all, despite the priceless sacrifice they were making at the time of the pandemic. From the findings discussed above, it can be concluded that while the Arabic news discourse has shown COVID-19 as an active agent who kills, attacks, destroys, and takes the lives of humans in a WAR, health practitioners were rarely mentioned positively in the corpora. Apart from the few mentions given above, the verbs combat, confront, fight, control, and protect were mostly talking about governmental and institutional efforts to deal with the pandemic, see Figures 3-7 above.

As for the weapons used in this war, the word shield(s) درع did not appear anywhere in the corpora (RF=0). On the other hand, the word weapon(s) سلاح/أسلحة appeared seven times in the corpora (RF=7); these are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Mentions of al’asliha(t/h)/silah* (الأسلحة) i.e. weapons

N	Concordance	File
1	أسلحة -صيني وهي النظرات التي يبتئها نصف أن الوباء أكدوه وأن الفيروس مخلوق وراثي في مختبر	\\BBC-A.8.txt
2	"سلاح" الإيطاليين لمواجهة الوباء* إفريقيا* فيروس* بروس كورونا* القضاء	\\BBC-A.9.txt
3	سلاح -نملكه ضد نفثي فيروس كورونا* موضوع أحد أقوى هو	\\CNN-A.15.txt
4	سلاح -العراقيين اللوفاية من كورونا* محادثة* بنظم لكونميدا	\\EU-A.11.txt
5	أسلحة -الدمار الشامل بواصل دعم مساعي الوزارات بلعب دورا رئيسيا في استراتيجية وزارة الدفاع لمحاربة	\\RTA.12.txt
6	سلاح -عالمي جديد فيروس كورونا يضرب الغرب	\\RTA.7.txt
7	أسلحة -القرن الحادي والعشرين. العالمية* بأنه نوع جديد من COVID-19، لوسيف فيروس، كورونا	\\RTA.7.txt
8	سلاح -شعبي ضد كورونا في تركيا* تاريخ "المطلات وأل	\\RTA.8.txt
9	سلاح -شعبي يستخدمه الأتراك لمواجهة فيروس التركية الرسمية* يوم* الأحد مقالا تحدثت فيه "عن"	\\RTA.8.txt

Mentions of al’asliha(t/h)/silah* (الأسلحة) i.e. weapons (RF=9)

Some of the interesting mentions of the word weapon came as 1) coronavirus was invented in a weapons lab in China, (Line 1, in Figure 10 above), 2) singing is the Italians’ weapon to confront the pandemic (Headline) (see Line 2), 3) the strongest weapon we have against coronavirus, (Line 3), 4) comedy is the Iraqis’ weapon of protection from the coronavirus (Headline) (Line 3), 5) “The website indicated that the Pentagon’s ...strategy to combat weapons of mass destruction, continues to support the governmental efforts concerned with combating “COVID-19” (Line 5), 6) A new global weapon: The Coronavirus is hitting the West more than Russia (Line 6), 7) COVID-19 is a new type of weapon of the 21st century, 8) Pickling liquids are a “popular weapon” against Corona in Türkiye (Lines 8 and 9, Figure 9).

As seen in lines 2, 4, 8, and 9 (Figure 10), the WAR metaphor was active in the news discourse; however, the weapon used to fight the enemy (the coronavirus) was singing for Italians, comedy for Iraqis, and pickling liquids for Turks. This shows that while the WAR metaphor is a discourse metaphor (Zinken, 2008; Semino, 2008)61, the cognitive selective mapping or substitution of particular elements from the source domain (WAR) is driven by local communicative purposes in discourse. In other words, metaphors are sometimes used here as a discourse practice to ‘intensify, mitigate’ (Wodak, 2001)62 and include or exclude certain socio-political meanings through discourse. In this vein, journalists employ a creative discourse practice to appeal cognitively to readers by maintaining the WAR metaphor frame but changing/substituting the weaponry used to compose ‘sensational news headlines’ (Chiluwa, 2022)63.

Lastly, as for the outcome of this ‘battle’/‘war’, mentions of winning/victory versus defeat/loss are given in Figures 11-13 below.

Figure 11

Mentions of defeat/ loss* versus win/ victory*in the CAN corpora



Figure 12

Mentions of yakhsar(khsaier)/yhzim* يخسر (خسائر)/يُهزم i.e. defeat/loss(lose) (RF=10) in the CAN corpora

1	مواجهة جديدة* أعلنت دائرة صحة النجف الأضراف عد نفثي كورونا. بالمحافظة* النجف تضع خطة	\\AA.16.txt
2	مواجهة الإغلاق والعزلة الذاتية* المصدر رويترز* سيهرمون "كوفيد-19" إذا تحلوا بالعزيمة في	\\RTA.5.txt
3	مواجهة كورونا* اتفق وزراء المالية ومحافظات البنوك على تقديم خطة G20 وافق وزراء دول	\\A-A.14.txt
4	مواجهة فيروس كورونا* قال وزير الخارجية الإيراني: إيران الولايات المتحدة تعزل جهونا في	\\CNN-A.1.txt
5	مواجهة جديدة* أعلنت دائرة صحة النجف الأضراف عد نفثي كورونا. بالمحافظة* النجف تضع خطة	\\A-A.15.txt
6	مواجهة نفثي فيروس كورونا المستجد فيها وضمت* وأنت هذه المساعدات لمساعدة واشفتن في	\\CNN-A.9.txt
7	مواجهة المرض* وقالت الملكة البالغة ثمانية توجهها خلال أسبوع لشهد غزيرة رعابها في	\\RTA.5.txt
8	مواجهة جائحة كوفيد-19 التي خلفت وفق أحدث* تعيش أوروبا والولايات المتحدة أوقاتا عصيبة في	\\EU-A.4.txt
9	مواجهة عالم بات مغلوبا رأس على عقب يوم الأربعاء* تصاعد في إيطاليا وفرنسا* وقف مئات الملايين في	\\RE.A.2.txt
10	مواجهة عدو حقن حملات* مساندة للجيش الأبيض الم* جنود الخفاء في	\\EU-A.12.txt
11	مواجهة نفثي لفيروس كورونا المستجد* وقال مالك محلولات، معقمة أصبحت شجيحة في البلاد التي	\\SNA.10.txt

Figure 13

Mentions of alnasr(yantasar)/alfawz* الفوز i.e. win/victory (RF=7) in the CAN corpora

N	Concordance	File
1	الانتصار في معركتها على فيروس كورونا وتحقق أن الرئيس الصيني يوم الخميس بأن الصين وثقة من	\\RE.A.10.txt
2	النصر وذلك الحديث عن مرحلة يعتبرون أنها آتية العالمية الثانية ما مهد بعد ذلك الطريق لتحقيقها	\\BBC-A.13.txt
3	1468 انتصر على ممالك سوريا وكنعان في سنة خلال حكم الفرعون المصري تحتمس الثالث الذي	\\RE.A.9.txt
4	1468 انتصر على ممالك سوريا وكنعان في سنة خلال حكم الفرعون المصري تحتمس الثالث الذي	\\RE.A.8.txt
5	سفنوز في هذه الحرب ضد كورونا أسرع مما يتوقع* قال الرئيس الأميركي دونالد ترامب اليوم "الغلاء	\\A-A.1.txt
6	سفنوز في هذه الحرب ضد كورونا أسرع مما يتوقع* قال الرئيس الأميركي دونالد ترامب اليوم "الغلاء	\\A-A.1.txt
7	فاز في معركة أخرى هذه المرة ضد فيروس كورونا الحرب إلى جانب الحلفاء* وأضاف في بيان لقد	\\A-A.2.txt

The findings suggest partial mapping of elements from the source domain of WAR as No. 4 in Table 7, where the WAR metaphor was used but in an economic and sociopolitical context that is also related to the effects/destruction caused by

61- Zinken, et al., “Discourse Metaphors”; Semino, Metaphor in Discourse; Semino, Metaphor in Discourse.

62- Wodak, “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” in Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, ed.

63- Chiluwa, Discourse, Media, and Conflict.

COVID-19, as in the headlines given below (Table 7).

Table 7

Examples of the ‘sensational headlines’ in the CAN corpora

.No	Some Headlines in English	Source
1	Singing is the Italians’ weapon to Confront the Pandemic	BBC-A- 9
2	Comedy is the Iraqis’ Weapon of Protection from the Coronavirus	Eu-A- 11
3	Pickling liquids are a “popular weapon” against Corona in Türkiye	RT-A- 8
4	Corona is destroying airlines...Virgin Atlantic is for sale	AA-18

In the examples given above, ‘the enemy’ (COVID-19) in the WAR metaphor remains the same; however, either the weapon (whether singing, comedy, or pickling liquids) or the victim (defendant) in this war changes, for example, airlines see No. 4 in Table 7. The CAN corpora were also searched for other metaphors listed in Semino (2020)64, such as FIRE metaphors and the ‘Tsunami’ metaphors. While the Tsunami metaphor was not found in the corpora (RF=0), FIRE metaphors were found as part of the WAR domain, as in the following headlines in Sky News- Arabic: (1) Street War..Corona ignites the strangest war between Washington and Beijing, 8th of May 2020 and (2) The Corona virus ignites an information war... and hackers enter on the line, 23rd of April 2020.

As seen above, the WAR metaphor was always central to the Arabic discourse reporting on COVID-19. It was found– in some cases– to be transferred into the Arabic news discourse due to a literal translation of a news press release, such as those given by Donald Trump and the former Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc in English (Table 6). This means that Arabic news discourse is largely dependent on what major Western news agencies and sources can provide. Reuters and US White House press releases.

In this context, the editor may choose to override, mitigate, or translate the metaphor found in the original news discourse while composing the news story in Arabic. Other metaphors were found to be produced by journalists to ‘intensify’ the news content and attract more readership as in the BBC-A where the journalist added the WAR metaphor to the headline alghina” ‘silah” al’iitaliicen limuajahat alwaba’ which means in English Singing is the Italians’ weapon to Confront the Pandemic discussed earlier in tables 6 and 7, see Figure 14 below

Figure 14

An example of the BBC-Arabic insertion of the WAR metaphor in the Arabic news headline



64- Semino, ““Not Soldiers but Fire-fighters” – Metaphors and Covid-19.”;

The example in Figure 14 above exemplifies a discourse practice exercised by the BBC-Arabic journalist to intensify the message of the news story and make it more sensational to Arabic readers. The analysis also documented the use of figurative language to intensify the source’s meaning. For example, RT was found to compose (No. 2 and 4 in Table 8) and translate complete news stories about Britain and America (No. 3 in Table 8) differently than it reported about COVID-19 in China (Russia’s close ally) (No. 1 in Table 8).

Table 8

Headlines that show the socio-cultural orientation of the news producer in RT-A

.No	Linguistics example	Source
1	:Arabic Phrase الصين تعلن عن أول “شهداءها” في المعركة ضد فيروس كورونا - ٢ أبريل ٢٠٢٠	Russia Today (RT-A)
	English Translation: China announces its first “martyrs” in the battle against the Corona virus - April 2, 2020	
2	:Arabic Phrase حرب الكمامات.. كيف أسقط كورونا أقنعة الدول؟- 6 أبريل ٢٠٢٠ ...آخر المعلومات في ما يخص الكمامات اتهمت الولايات المتحدة باعتراض مسار شحنة تحمل ٢٠٠ ألف كمامة، كانت متجهة إلى ألمانيا، وتحويلها لاستخدامها الخاص، في خطوة أدمنت بوصفها “فرصة حديثة”. الحادثة ليست الأولى، أيضا تم قرصنة أميركية للشحنة كانت متوجهة إلى فرنسا من الصين	
	English Translation: The war of masks.. How did Corona bring down the masks of countries? April 6, 2020 The latest information regarding masks: The United... States was accused of intercepting a shipment carrying 200,000 masks, which was headed to Germany, and diverting them for its own use, in a move that was condemned as “ modern piracy .” This incident is not the first. An American also pirated a shipment that was heading to France from China We ask more: Has the mask war revealed the other side of some countries? Have the values that you tried to export ?to other countries fallen? does the end justify the mean	
3	:Arabic Phrase وسائل إعلام: عدد ضحايا كورونا في أمريكا يتجاوز خسائر حرب فيتنام - ٢٨ أبريل ٢٠٢٠	
	:English Translation Media outlets: The number of Corona victims in America exceeds its loss in the Vietnam War - April 28, 2020	
4	Arabic Phrase سلاح عالمي جديد: فيروس كورونا يضرب الغرب أكثر من روسيا- 26 أبريل ٢٠٢٠	
	:English Translation A new global weapon: The coronavirus is hitting the West more than Russia- April 26, 2020	

Russia Today-Arabic has described, in Headline No. 1, the death of the Chinese medical and healthcare providers as ‘the martyrs’ of the WAR against COVID-1965. It utilised the WAR metaphor to describe the WEST, which is a metonymy that includes the US, Britain, Germany and other countries, which ARE Russia’s main rivals. On the other hand, in Headline No. 2, the US was a pirate in ‘a war of masks’, however, this time piracy was in the middle of the ocean instead of the

65- This was the only use of the word ‘martyr’ in the whole CAN corpora.

land. In Headline 3, the US was described as having the largest number of COVID-19 victims and lastly (Headline 4) the recent global weapon hits the WEST (including US) more than Russia.

Therefore, it is clear that the WAR metaphor was utilised in many cases to convey the socio-political orientation and interests of the countries that own these news agencies rather than producing a news discourse that provides genuine guidance and understanding of the pandemic during such a difficult time of health crisis. In fact, the news discourse about the pandemic and other issues was always a conveyor, if not a promoter, of the socio-cultural and political orientation of the countries these news agencies operate from; see Elyas et al. (2022)⁶⁶, and Lahlali (2023)⁶⁷ for more on how news discourse on COVID-19 is affected by the socio-political orientations.

5. Conclusion

The current study aimed to find, through a cognitive critical discourse analysis, which metaphors are central to Arabic news discourse reporting about COVID-19 and in what patterns or forms they appear. Similar to Charteris-Black (2021)⁶⁸, Papamanoli and Kaniklidou (2022)⁶⁹ and Musolff et al. (2022)⁷⁰, the WAR metaphors were found to be a central 'discourse metaphor' (Zinken, 2008; Semino, 2008)⁷¹, yet this time, to the Arabic news discourse reporting about the pandemic of COVID-19. In most cases, the metaphor was found to be used in the Arabic news discourse as a discourse practice to intensify the response of the public and readers towards the pandemic, as it encourages a national 'protective response against' a health crisis (the pandemic) that requires an immediate national response, despite the fact that it may also evoke the loss of control and fear (Charteris-Black, 2021)⁷².

In this vein, verbal nouns and verbs were the most frequent linguistic patterns used to instantiate the WAR metaphor in the CAN corpora, alongside other expressions such as the frontline(s) rows, invisible enemy and white troops. In general, verbs that reflect a systematic way of using force and power to control the pandemic i.e. control and protect were rarely mentioned in comparison to the verbs that suggest an aggressive use of force dynamics to defend oneself in a WAR or physical battling frame i.e. fight, combat and confront. However, in a few other cases, the WAR metaphor was used due to a literal translation of the source news text (in English) such as translating the political speech of the American president Donald Trump and the Vietnamese former prime minister (Table 6). This shows that the Arabic news discourse is partly dependent on what major Western news agencies and sources can provide e.g. Reuters and the US White House. These practices in journalism are also seen as discourse practices where 66- Elyas et al., "Politicizing COVID-19 Lingua in Western and Arab News-paper.

67- Lahlali, Arabic Media Coverage of Pandemics: Discourse, Strategy and Impact.

68- Charteris-Black, Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?

69- Papamanoli and Kaniklidou, "Covid-19 Representations in Political Statements"

70- Andreas Musolff et al., eds., Pandemic and Crisis Discourse: Communicating COVID-19 and Public Health Strategy

71- Zinken, et al., "Discourse Metaphors"; Semino, Metaphor in Discourse; Semino, Metaphor in Discourse.

72- Charteris-Black, Metaphors of Coronavirus: Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?

the news editor may choose to override, mitigate or translate the metaphor found in the original text. In some other cases, the current study found that the spread of such metaphors was due to both discourse and translation practice. Overall, journalists were found to employ creative discourse practices to appeal cognitively to the readers by maintaining the WAR metaphor frame but changing the weaponry and agents to compose 'sensational news headlines' (Chiluwa, 2022)⁷³. It is recommended that journalists, when translating news from a foreign discourse, choose distancing strategies such as transforming metaphors into similes and take into account spreading a language that gives confidence more than increasing fear and stress in such a difficult time of the pandemic.

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73- Chiluwa, Discourse, Media, and Conflict:

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