

A corpus-based metaphor analysis of news reports on the Middle East Road Map peace process

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1. Introduction

Metaphor is acknowledged as playing a central role in our understanding of how language, thought and discourse are structured and media discourse as having a persuasive and powerful role in reproducing discourse. This study is designed to analyse the use of metaphors for peace in American, Israeli and Palestinian media communication on the Middle East peace process. This paper presents the preliminary findings of a corpus-based metaphor analysis looking at an ongoing peace process from different points of view. The analysis and comparison of the metaphors used will allow us to show how the same peace process may be differently conceptualised at different points of time and by different parties on account of different socio-political factors and/or ideologies. The preliminary results show that metaphor is a predominant feature of peace discourse, and the types of metaphors used to conceptualise peace are varied.

2. Theoretical and methodological considerations

This section presents a brief overview of the cognitive and pragmatic perspectives that guide this study

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that abstract concepts are largely discussed via metaphor. This allows us to understand abstract notions, such as peace, through concrete ideas. Lakoff and Johnson argue that “we tend to structure the less concrete and inherently vaguer concepts in terms of more concrete concepts, which are more clearly delineated in our experience” (1980: 112). The concept that becomes understood (the more abstract or unfamiliar concept) is the TARGET domain. The other concept, which somehow facilitates understanding or discussion of the target is the SOURCE domain (the more concrete or familiar concept). Conceptual metaphor theory sees the connections between concept areas in terms of correspondences or mappings between elements within source and target domains. Usually the mapping of source domain elements to the target domain is represented as TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN (Lakoff 1993: 207). In the example LOVE IS A JOURNEY, where JOURNEY is our SOURCE domain and LOVE our TARGET domain, we use the knowledge we have of the concept journey in order to understand and describe the concept love. The final goal, therefore, is to talk about love. The mapping from source domain to target domain is the following:

The lovers correspond to travellers

The love relationship corresponds to the vehicle

The state of being in the relationship corresponds to the physical closeness of being in the vehicle

The lovers' common goals correspond to their common destinations on the journey

Difficulties correspond to impediments to travel

(Lakoff 1993: 207)

These set of correspondences become apparent in such metaphorical expressions as those below.

Look *how far we've come*.
 We're *at a crossroads*.
 We'll just have to *go our separate ways*.
 We can't *turn back now*.
 I don't think this relationship is *going anywhere*.
Where are we?
 We're *stuck*
 It's been a *long, bumpy road*.
 We're just *spinning our wheels*.
 We've gotten *off the track*.
 Our marriage is *on the rocks*.
 We've gotten *off the track*.
 The relationship is *foundering*.

(Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 44-45)

What is quite interesting about a cognitive approach to metaphor is the idea that metaphor can limit understanding even when it is employed to enhance it (Bridgeman 2000: 23). This notion of metaphor limiting understanding is especially important in discussions of peace and negotiations. In order to explore the limiting potential of metaphor entailments, Lakoff and Johnson propose new metaphors that have different sets of entailments, for example, LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART. These metaphors are contrasted with our usual understandings of LOVE IS A JOURNEY or LOVE IS MADNESS. Lakoff and Johnson consider the extent to which by limiting understanding, metaphor can have an effect on participant action. Specifically, they point out that:

metaphors can thus be appropriate because they sanction actions, justify inferences, and help us set goals. For example, certain actions, inferences, and goals are dictated by the LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART metaphor but not by the LOVE IS MADNESS metaphor. If love is madness, I do not concentrate on what I have to do to maintain it. But if it is work, then it requires activity, and if it is a work or art, it requires a very special kind of activity, and if it is collaborative, then it is even further restricted and specified (1980: 142).

Bridgeman (2000: 25) argues that it is not hard to imagine the possible outcome for a relationship between two individuals when one individual has the understanding that LOVE IS MADNESS and the other individual has the understanding that LOVE IS A COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ART.

2.2 Corpus-based metaphor analysis

Conceptual Metaphor Theory does not provide a systematic methodology that can be applied to the study of metaphor when considering expressions in a corpus of naturally-occurring data. Stefanowitsch (2006: 1) argues that the first problem that any corpus-based analysis faces is that of identifying and extracting the relevant data from the corpus. There are various possibilities for extracting metaphorical expressions. It is possible to generate concordances or particular words or expressions in a corpus, which results in lists of occurrences within the preceding and following context. One can manually analyse these, or a part of these, concordances in order to distinguish between metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses (Deignan 1999, 2005). It is also possible to investigate the collocates of the particular word or expression under investigation, in order to find out what words tend to co-occur and if these are used literally or metaphorically. Semino (2008) argues that different methods can be combined but that the suitability of the method depends on the goals of the particular study.

3. Corpus and method

To study the metaphors found in this particular discourse, a corpus of 530 articles covering the first 5 years of the Middle East ‘Road Map’ peace process (2002-2006) was compiled and analysed. These years cover events such as the announcement of a new peace initiative, the publication and implementation, the *hudna* (a tentative ceasefire) and hostilities which resumed in 2006 causing many to declare the Road Map dead. The articles, which include both news reports and editorials, were collected from *The New York Times*, *Jerusalem Post* and *Al-Quds* using the search terms “Middle East” “Road Map” and “peace process”. Each article was assigned a code reflecting the source, year and number of the article. The number of articles for each source are noted in Table 1 below. References were taken from entire articles, including headlines.

<i>Publication</i>	<i>Number of articles / % of corpus</i>	<i>Tokens in texts</i>
<i>The New York Times</i>	160 (30%)	112,465
<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	230 (43%)	172,586
<i>Al Quds</i>	140 (27%)	98,321
Total	530 (100%)	383,372

Table 1. Data on the publications

The first step in identifying possible metaphors was to carry out a collocation analysis (using *WordSmith Tools 5.0*) of the search terms “peace” and “peace process”, which were subsequently expanded to include search terms such as “talks”, “negotiations”, “agreement”, “plan”, etc. Table 2 shows the first ten collocates of “peace” ranked by frequency.

Rank by frequency	All words	Lexical words
1	THE (2,252)	MAP (512)
2	TO (1,170)	ROAD (383)
3	A (679)	PLAN (234)
4	OF (649)	DEAL (79)
5	FOR (640)	MAKE (68)
6	PROCESS (627)	SIDE (64)
7	IN (610)	BACKED (58)
8	AND (598)	PROGRESS (54)
9	MAP (512)	TOWARDS (46)
10	MIDDLE (423)	PARTNER (40)

Table 2. Collocates of “peace” ranked by frequency. The numbers in brackets indicate the occurrence of the word within 5 spaces to the left and right of the search term.

Concordances were generated for each of the collocates and the surrounding co-text was manually analysed to determine metaphorical or literal use. Sample concordances for two of the collocates of “peace” are illustrated in Tables 3 and 4 below.

when it said that there could be no	progress	towards a peace settlement without
greater obstacle to the peace	progress.	The Palestinian prime minister,

educate violence and perhaps make	progress	toward peace ... "Mr Arafat predictab
which have so far blocked any	progress	to a peaceful settlement, nothing has
must stop settlement activity as	progress	is made towards peace, suggesting
despite Israel's effort to make	progress	and pursue a path of dialogue,
to accept the roadmap to achieve	progress	in the peace process. On the Israeli

Table 3. Sample concordances for the collocate "progress"

present there is no Palestinian	partner	with whom to proceed
to the absence of a negotiating	partner	since the election of Mahmoud
and that his only negotiating	partner	is the US. But Israel officials
believes there is no Palestinian	partner	for negotiations but believes it
considered a willing Israeli	partner	which puts no obstacles in the
and he could find no negotiating	partner	on the Palestinian side. But Mr
apparent that far from wanting a	partner	with which to negotiate, the Israeli

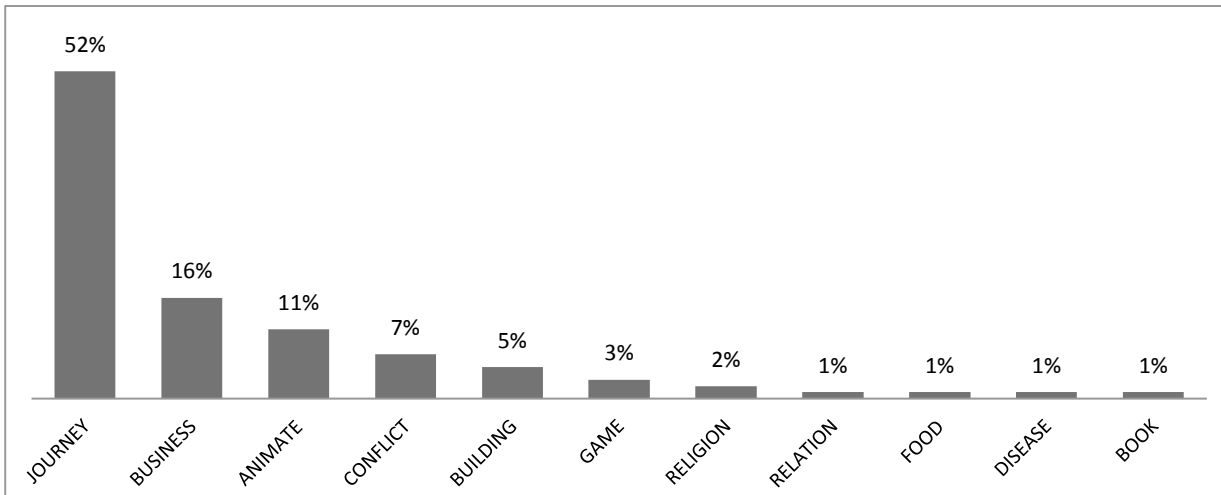
Table 4. Sample concordances for the collocate "partner"

Concordance lists including only metaphorical items were save. The source domain was listed for each reference, for example, words such as *progress*, *path*, *step*, *stall*, *obstacle*, etc. were listed under the JOURNEY domain. Subsequently, a list of the metaphorical expressions falling under each source domain was produced.

4. Preliminary results

The preliminary findings of this study show that metaphor is a predominant feature of peace discourse, and the types of metaphors used to conceptualise peace are varied.

The first research question asks what metaphors for peace occur in the news reports on the Middle East 'Road Map' peace process. In order to answer this question we examined what metaphor keywords and source domains were used to conceptualise peace/the peace process. It is important to indicate what source domains are used what words from the semantic field are used more frequently by journalists and the politicians they quote, and if there is a systematic use of a specific source domain(s). Many of the metaphor types mentioned in Lakoff and Johnson (1980) – JOURNEY, BUILDING, GAME, etc. - appear in the press coverage of the peace process. These metaphors include references to peace as something yet to be reached or created. Others describe peace as something already existing but which can be obtained either in exchange for something else or by winning it. Peace is also personified and there are references to the different phases of its life. Graph 1 below shows the distribution in the corpus of the main source domains for the target domain PEACE.



Graph 1. Distribution of source domains for peace in the corpus

The tables below show the metaphor keys (Charteris-Black 2004) belonging to the most frequent SOURCE DOMAINS.

JOURNEY									
Road map	75	Search	16	Return (to)	7	Course	3	Delay	1
Towards	40	Seek	14	Pave	6	Attain	3	Sluggish	1
Obstacle	37	Derail	13	Stop	5	Obstruct	2	Far	1
Progress	33	End	12	Route	4	Roadblock	2	Force along	1
Launch	32	Wreck	12	Continue	4	Press on	2	Carry on	1
Stall	26	Re-start	12	Halt	4	Stick to	2	Impede	1
Step	26	Path	12	Sink	4	Emerge	2	Detour	1
Achieve	23	Pursue	11	Turning point	3	Quicken	2	Layby	1
Road	23	Move	11	Kickstart	3	Journey	2	Shortcut	1
Forward	21	On track	11	Stride	3	U-turn	2	Abandonment	1
Reach	18	Block	10	Pace	3	Fork in the road	1		
Way	17	Lead to	10	Find	3	Quest	1		
Advance	16	Drive	9	Bumpy	3	Bypass	1		

Table 5. Metaphorical expressions in the JOURNEY domain

BUSINESS			
Deal	63	Pay	3
Partner	49	Squander	3
Negotiate	17	Privatise	2
Broker	15	Territories (for)	2
Land (for)	13	Term	2
Work	10	Ownership	2
Agenda	8	Business	2
Trade (for)	5	Dividend	1
In return (for)	5	Debt	1
Buy	4	Gain	1
Exchange	4	Endorse	1
Gruntwork	3	Produce	1
Breach	3	Bargain	1

Table 6. Metaphorical expressions in the BUSINESS domain

ANIMATE			
Die	2	Fragile	1
Defunct	2	Crippled	1
Suffer	1	Embryonic	1
Rehabilitation	1	Re-energise	1
Resuscitate	1	Healthy state	1
Aborted	1	Come to life	1
Comatose	1		

Table 7. Metaphorical expressions in the ANIMATE domain

CONFLICT							
Threat	23	Breakthrough	3	Terror	1	Withdraw	1
Destroy	12	Protect	3	War	1	Attack	1
Enemy	8	Victim	3	Danger	1	Defend	1
Blow	8	Sabotage	3	Armed	1	Defeat	1
Jeopardise	6	Undermine	3	Hostage	1	Explosion	1
Oppose	5	Fight	2	Force	1	Ruin	1
Struggle	3	Retreat	1	Strategy	1	Battle	1
Damage	3	Rival	1	Torpedo	1		

Table 8. Metaphorical expressions in the CONFLICT domain

BUILDING			
Support	10	Lay the groundwork	3
Build	8	Crumble	2
Framework	7	Forge	2
Collapse	7	Base	2
Barrier	6	Window	2
Blueprint	5	Groundbreaking	1
Architect	5	Repair	1
Foundation	4	Disintegrate	1
Fence	3	Dismantle	1

Table 9. Metaphorical expressions in the BUILDING domain

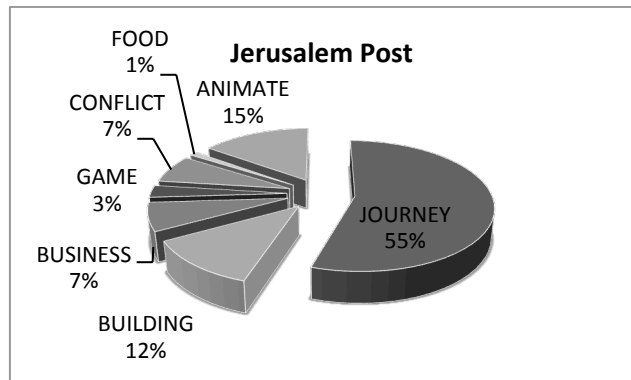
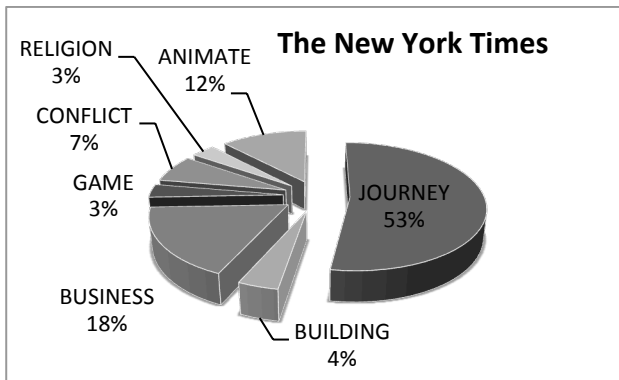
RELIGION			
Mission	8	Shepherd	1
Vision	7	Tabernacle	1
Believe	4	Holy Grail	1
Renew	3	Resurrect	1
Faith	3	Enshrined	1

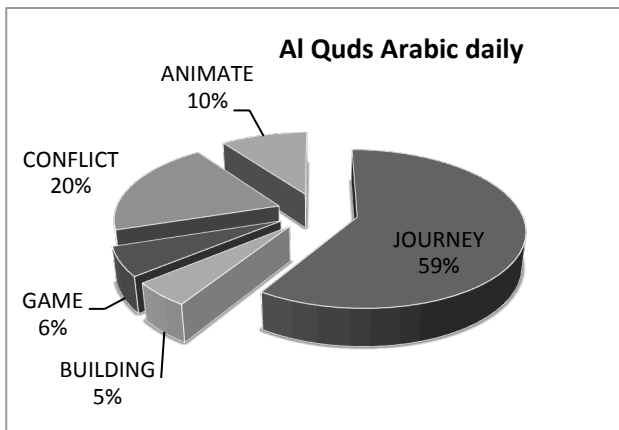
Table 11. Metaphorical expressions in the RELIGION domain

GAME			
Win	9	Wager	1
Moves	5	Trick	1
Risk	3	Victor	1
Prize	3	Fan	1
Game	3	Play	1
Kick off	2	Joke	1
Stalemate	2	Striking distance	1
Timeout	1	Card	1

Table 10. Metaphorical expressions in the GAME domain

A second research question asks if there are similarities and/or differences in the use of metaphors for peace by the three newspapers?





Various peace discourses seem to arise from the corpus, therefore they will be referred to as American peace, Israeli peace and Palestinian peace. To date the data has been analysed mostly quantitatively. Qualitative analysis has yet to be conducted on the majority of the findings. What follows is simply an initial look at the differences that have arisen from the various sub-corpora.

American peace: THE PEACE PROCESS IS RELIGION

An important objective for political leadership is to create a perception that the speaker is to be trusted because they have a plan for a future that is inherently good. A common choice of metaphor is that of *vision* (Charteris-Black 2005). References to *vision* in the press coverage of the road map peace process all refer to Bush's *vision of the state of Palestine and the state of Israel living side by side in peace*. It is considered a *bold vision*, a *good vision*, many leaders *agree with his vision*. However, *as Mr Bush's national security adviser said to him...it would really help things along if Israel accepted the road map, not just the vision*.

Israeli peace: PEACE IS A JOURNEY / PEACE IS CONFLICT / PEACE IS BUSINESS

Israel's peace discourse serves many purposes, one of the most important being the construction of the Israeli speaker's positive self-image as a peace seeker ('us and them').

Israel is a *peace-seeking* nation, Israel's *hand has always been extended in peace* to all Arab states and to our Palestinian neighbours. (Jpost26_03)

Israel has tried to *make great strides toward peace*; it is the Arab states that must now show that they are ready to *deliver their side of the bargain*. (JPost41_03)

Palestinian peace: PEACE IS CONFLICT

There is a threat to peace which leads to the identification of an enemy.

...the only official Israeli agenda had been *to torpedo any viable peace*. (Al-Quds20_03)

US and Israel...*holding* the Palestinian negotiator *hostage* to a process that nothing indicates it will ever end...(Al-Quds34_03)

Israel is determined to *destroy the peace process* through settlement expansion. (Al-Quds42_04)

5. Concluding remarks

This study aimed at analysing the metaphors for peace in the press coverage of the Middle East Road Map peace process by answering questions about metaphor type and variation. Metaphor is a predominant and diverse feature of this discourse as evidenced from the corpus. The types of metaphors used for peace are as varied as JOURNEY, BUSINESS, ANIMATE, CONFLICT, BUILDING, GAME and RELIGION, among others.

Further research will involve a more detailed analysis of the similarities and differences found in the reporting of the three newspapers. Moreover, I intend to compare the metaphors found in the newspaper corpus with those in a corpus of political speeches regarding the peace process.

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