



CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN WAR DISCOURSE: ANALYZING MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Israel-Palestine conflict, conceptual metaphors, news framing, media representations, war discourse</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Sidra Haroon, Lecturer (Department of Linguistics and Communications), University of Management and Technology, Lahore. Email: sidra.haroon@umt.edu.pk</p>	<p>This study aims to investigate how the conceptual metaphors differ in their contribution to framing techniques across various Eastern and Western digital news articles related to Israel-Palestine conflict. This study utilized Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as well as Framing Theory with various types by Entman (1993) as theoretical frameworks. This is a mixed-method study, descriptive in nature. Seventy authentic web news articles related to Israel-Palestine conflict from both Western and Eastern media outlets were chosen through purposive sampling technique. The exploration and enlisting of conceptual metaphors and the categorization of framing techniques were qualitative in nature, hence done manually. For the comparison and contrast among Western and Eastern Media portrayals, which employed a quantitative approach, a chi-square test of independence was applied which established a statistically significant relation, resulting in the rejection of null hypothesis. Furthermore, post-hoc residual analysis with Bonferroni correction indicated that Western outlets incorporated significantly more simplification framing type, meanwhile Eastern sources relied significantly more on employing emotional/empathy framing type. The outcomes reveal the subtle yet significant impact of conceptual metaphor incorporation and framing strategies to influence the audience's comprehension, elicit particular responses and shape their perceptions about such a sensitive and global conflict.</p>

Introduction:

Zanotti and Sharp (2024) mentions the conflict between Israel and Palestine as one of the most prolonged and complex issues as far as the contemporary history is concerned. It started as early as the 1900s from claims concerning territory, national identity and religion. Akkuş (2019) sheds light on a “devastating” strike conducted by Hamas, on October 7, 2023, on Israel from the Gaza Strip and reports that it resulted in kindling the latest flare-up in the conflict and a disastrous upsurge. Critical humanitarian issues have arisen in Gaza due to the on-going fighting which has caused thousands of casualties on both sides. Various international organizations, agencies, and tribunals have taken notice of this pivotal issue and have made attempts to resolve the conflict, but geopolitical intricacy and lack of enforcement measures have hindered their efforts. The 2023-2024 escalation of this long-term conflict has once again gained international attention and coverage, influencing media narratives, security policy, and international diplomacy. As the Israel-Palestine conflict is receiving increased global media coverage, the language and the techniques used to convey the events have become just as significant. Narrative construction, usage of terminology, and strategic representation do not only convey the news but also shape the audience’s perspective and influence their reaction. In this context, language acts as a tool to endorse ideologies, legitimizing or condemning narratives and framing identities. (Qadeer et. Al 2021) Thus, this research focuses on discursive battlefields rather than the physical one. One of the key linguistic tools that shape such discourse is conceptual metaphor, which not only reflects but also shapes public’s viewpoint concerning complex sociopolitical issues.

Tomović-Šundić and Gvozdenović (2020) argue that incorporation of conceptual metaphors is quite common in our everyday lives. They are beyond informal speech and play a role in how we process information and interpret social concerns. Metaphors are powerful and can be incorporated in political and social discourse to effectively yet implicitly sway people’s opinions and mold the subjects into a less controversial form through specific framing. Alshunnag (2016) introduces the notion of conceptual metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) which plays a crucial role in how we view and articulate ideas about the world. These metaphors make it easier for us to make sense of abstract concepts by linking them to tangible, day-to-day experiences. One example “Time is money” exhibits the abstract idea of ‘time’ in terms of something tangible like ‘money.’ While conceptual metaphors shape understanding at a cognitive level, framing theory examines how media structures and emphasizes news information to guide audience’s interpretation, making the two closely interrelated in analyzing news discourse.

Shahzad et al. (2023) states that framing helps in presenting information in certain ways to influence attitudes, perceptions and understanding of situations. Bali & Kour (2024) elaborate that media outlets commonly incorporate framing techniques in order to report and exhibit selective aspects and highlight the information which is favorable to certain parties. Thus, framing is of significant value for the media outlets because they can create and communicate viewpoints which provoke target emotions or cognitive responses. This process of media framing is particularly beneficial in conflict reporting so that the media outlets can structure and display images and information carefully as per their preference.

Given that both metaphors and framing strategies impact audience’s perception, examining their interplay provides a comprehensive view of how media narratives construct meaning in coverage of Israel-Palestine conflict. Framing plays a role in shaping the public’s perception and response to news and events. Whereas metaphors significantly contribute to that framing. Moreover, Charteris-Black (2005) in his book *“Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor”* (p.16) claims that metaphors contribute to framing. They are particularly persuasive

because they frame information in ways that are consistent with the speaker's ideological viewpoint. This shows that metaphors and framing complement each other. Metaphors are the language that forms a frame and the frame itself too, reflects certain beliefs and concepts.

The use of metaphors in news reporting as well as the framing techniques incorporated in narratives related to war discourse, have been researched previously but such rhetorical devices, especially conceptual metaphors still have a subtle but significant influence on how the audience perceives and reacts to the news related to unresolved, global war conflicts. The public often tends to miss the combined effect of such strategies opted by news media outlets, who on purpose highlight certain aspects while marginalizing others. Despite a wealth of literature on this subject, there is scarcity of recent research that particularly identifies, enlists, categorizes and compares the conceptual metaphors' contribution to framing in reporting Israel-Palestine conflict. Hence, with the purpose to fill this gap in literature, this study examines how the conceptual metaphors differ in their contribution to framing types across various Eastern and Western news articles related to Israel-Palestine conflict?

1. Literature Review

Mercado (2021) discusses the Israel-Palestine conflict and deems current media coverage related to the issue as intricate and important, particularly due to its long-lasting nature and political ramifications among other international crises. Mohamed's (2024) study is another notable contribution in this area, employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate the media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The author aims to analyze how conflict is communicated not only through the linguistic choices made to report it but also the discursive practices and wider socio-cultural contexts that shape people's perspectives. The outcomes demonstrate complexities of Israel-Palestine conflict shaped and conveyed through media coverage and offer insights into the interplay between discourse and power. Awartani (2021) in his study also determines that Israel-Palestine conflict is a subject matter which is vastly conveyed by utilizing narrative strategies and framing techniques. The researcher quotes Manor (2018) who states with emphasis that Israel-Palestine conflict provides a striking depiction of the way language can be strategically employed to frame occurrences and influence audience's opinions. Israeli-Palestinian conflict has dominated the global debate, and social media has provided a space where a variety of personalities including journalists, diplomats, and traditional media compete to convey the subject matter related to the conflict to their audience in their own ways. Moreover, another study by Bartholomé et al. (2017) supports the earlier claims and suggests that indeed such biased narratives, framed purposefully, have a substantial influence on audience's attitude, perception and political biases. This depicts that media plays a role in fostering ideological divisions and holds the power to impact foreign policy especially through language framing and strategic communication similar to what this research paper intends to determine in terms of the usage of conceptual metaphors and the way they contribute to framing. The researcher Zanaty (2024) has conducted a contemporary study analyzing the conceptual metaphors incorporated in Avichai Adraee's political speech related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The results exhibit that metaphorical language and rhetoric used in Adraee's speech, present a false picture and portray Israel as a religiously tolerant, altruistic state whilst completely omitting their destructive, violent actions. One example quoted by Zanaty (2024) illustrates the contrast created due to the use of conceptual metaphors, i.e., Israel is framed as a responsible and moral authority, whereas Hamas is depicted as an aggressive and extremist group. It is evident that employing such metaphors in war rhetoric and framing that fulfills biased motives, helps the organizations or political figures to distort narratives as well as to

strengthen ideological divisions. Furthermore, Javed et al. (2023) present a comparative study examining conceptual metaphors and their types in a few speeches by Imran Khan and Narendra Modi. The outcome of the comparative study aligns with Lakoff's (1993) standpoint that conceptual metaphors can be a powerful instrument if used skillfully in political narratives to convey rivalry, struggle, biases, conflict in order to mold the audience's mindset. The usage of conceptual metaphors in political speeches depicts how those metaphors aren't just rhetorical devices but instead play a significant role in shaping the way the general public views and comprehends sociopolitical events and conflicts. Bhowmik and Fisher (2023) also investigate the depiction of Israel-Palestine conflict by American news network CNN. Their findings reveal the overwhelming presence of war narratives in American media. Not only is it present but it also focuses on advocating and communicating the standpoint of elite voices such as American foreign policy makers, notably from the US or Israel. As per Bhowmik and Fisher (2023), CNN can be explicitly observed to have depicted the conflict by putting forth violence-oriented imagery and marginalizing Palestinian outlook and position while simultaneously leaving out the historical context in order to impact and manipulate the audience's perception regarding the conflict. As the study concludes the dearth of peace journalism and highlights the existence of biasness in media portrayals, this research paper is built on the basis of such findings to contribute to critical media literacy.

Shahzad et al. (2023) provide comparative examination of the framing techniques used by various media outlets i.e., *BBC*, *CNN*, *RT* and *Al-Jazeera* which cover headlines from the coverage related to Israel-Palestine conflict from years 2019-2022. The author unveiled significant bias in coverage patterns and the way they are presented to the audience. The results depict that the news channels i.e., *BBC* and *CNN* can be observed to favor and present pro-Israel narratives (74% and 90% respectively). This shows that they tend to frame Israelis as victims and Palestinians as aggressors. Contrastively, news outlets like *RT* and *Al-Jazeera* were found to provide coverage of the Israeli-Palestine conflict in a comparatively more balanced way. *RT* employed neutral frames (58%) and *Al-Jazeera* network can also be observed advocating frames which are pro-Palestine and focus on humanistic welfare. While the study identifies bias in coverage patterns, it does not explore how specific framing types or conceptual metaphors contribute to these biases. Bali and Kour (2024) put forth another comparative study that focuses on analyzing how print media outlets of India and Pakistan covered and portrayed the Israel-Palestine conflict through employing various framing techniques. The outcomes of this study reveal that the Indian news network *Indian Express* exhibited a biased pro-Israeli predisposition by depicting the Israelis as victims through their narratives and even are found to be rationalizing their behavior. On the other hand, *Dawn News*, which is a Pakistani media outlet, supported the opposition party and highlighted Palestinians as the wronged and Israelis as the perpetrators of the chaos and inhumane attacks. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that to serve personal geopolitical issues and viewpoints, the media outlets cover and report opposing realities by utilizing various techniques such as biased storytelling, prioritizing aimed narratives, and selective source preferences. In such discourse, language performs both the roles of framing and promoting and eliciting certain ideological perspectives and behaviors.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research has employed Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) which states that metaphors are not just stylistic or linguistic devices but rather are processes directly related to human cognition and reasoning abilities. Metaphors simply facilitate humans to conceptualize and comprehend complex, intangible abstract constructs using methodical

mappings. These mappings allow them to understand tough target domains (abstract concepts) by means of more tangible, concrete source domains. In the context of this research, CMT was applied using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), which systematically identifies conceptual metaphors by analyzing source-target domain correspondences in textual material and provides replicable and widely validated method for metaphor detection, guaranteeing a reliable analysis (Steen, 2010).

Complementing the cognitive perspective, the study incorporates Entman's (1993) media-framing theory, which builds upon foundational insights from Goffman (1974) but provides a functional framework with applicable categories of framing. This study utilizes these five frames i.e., Conflict framing, Moral evaluation framing, Agency and attribution framing, Emotional/empathy framing and Complexity/simplification framing to examine and categorize the conceptual metaphors with reference to the frames they contribute to linguistically.

For this study, these two frameworks were integrated to examine the ideological construction of media discourse. CMT provides the cognitive lens to identify and enlist conceptual metaphors in web news articles, revealing how abstract ideas are structured and presented on a micro-level. Building on these metaphorical insights, Framing Theory offers a discursive lens to categorize how these metaphors contribute to broader frames, shaping narratives, ideological standpoints and layered meanings. Unifying the cognitive notion of metaphors with the structural organization of various framing types, captures both how meaning is mentally formed and how it is communicated and interpreted within media narratives. This dual focus ensures that the analysis proceeds fluidly from linguistic details to ideological patterns in the war discourse related to Israel-Palestine conflict.

3. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative procedures to provide a comprehensive analysis of conceptual metaphors and their contribution to framing in digital news articles. Preliminary analysis stage was qualitative in nature, involving manual identification and enlisting conceptual metaphors and their categorization according to their contribution to framing types. Although these procedures are not explicitly presented in this article, they form the basis for the quantitative comparison which is the primary focus of the study. The comparison between the Western and Eastern datasets (derived from qualitative preliminary analysis), demanded a quantitative approach. Quantitative analysis, through statistical evaluation, highlights measurable frequencies and patterns, resulting in a more precise comparison (Creswell, 2014). The incorporation of both methods thus strengthens the study in its entirety, reflecting Creswell and Clark's (2018) view that mixed-method research offers more comprehensive insights. Furthermore, the research design is descriptive as it involves the systematic examination of already existing web news articles without manipulating variables or introducing interventions. In terms of analytical tools, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Entman's (1993) framing types serve the purpose and facilitate a methodical and a theory-oriented process, ensuring consistency across the entire research and the attainment of outcomes which are in alignment with descriptive design and mixed-method nature of the study.

The population for this study comprised all English-language web news articles addressing the Israel-Palestine conflict and published after year 2023, sourced from authentic digital news media outlets representing both Eastern and Western viewpoints. The digital media sites as well as the articles were only suitable for inclusion if they met the linguistic and thematic criteria established beforehand to maintain reliability and authenticity. From this population, a total of 70

web news articles (*see table 1.1*) were purposefully selected, sourced from ten distinct digital news outlets; five representing Western media and five representing Eastern media. Non-probability purposive sampling was employed, enabling the deliberate selection of news media sources and inclusion of articles that fulfilled the established criteria while ensuring manageability and depth. The sample size is large enough to cover diverse usage of conceptual metaphors and framing techniques but also manageable enough to allow for detailed examination as noted by Neuendorf (2017) who stated that sample size in content analysis must consider both representativeness and practical constraints.

Table 1.1

Western and Eastern Sample Sources

Total No. of Articles: 70			
Western Sources		Eastern Outlets	
The Guardian	7	The Dawn	7
BBC	7	AL- Jazeera	7
CNN	7	Tehran Times	7
Reuters	7	Middle East Eye News	7
Fox News	7	Andolu Ajensi	7

Procedure:

Preliminary Analysis

The study began with preliminary analysis, which involved examining the selected news articles for the purpose of identifying and enlisting the conceptual metaphors present in them.

- i. The conceptual metaphors were extracted through manual analysis by employing Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as well as Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) as the analytical tools. Each expression was examined in its immediate textual context to determine whether its meaning contrasted with a more basic, concrete meaning. Hence if systematic mapping between source and target domain could be established as per CMT's definition, the expression was classified as a conceptual metaphor.
- ii. Following that, the enlisted conceptual metaphors were then investigated to determine the types of framing those conceptual metaphors contributed to. They were categorized under the five types suggested in framing theory by Entman (1993). Since the definitions and indicators provided by Entman (1993) were general, their application to conceptual metaphors required interpretive analysis. Thus, classification was guided by both the theoretical definitions of framing types, and the contextual cues present in the web news articles. This interpretive approach is in alignment with prior framing studies, which emphasize the role of contextual cues in linking abstract frame definitions to concrete discourse (Gamson and Modiliani, 1989). While the preliminary analysis of conceptual metaphors and framing categorization was conducted to generate data, these steps are not detailed in this article due to space constraints, focusing on the subsequent quantitative comparative analysis.

1. After the above mentioned two preliminary analysis stages, two datasets were constructed using the findings. One consisted of the raw count of the conceptual metaphors and the framing types

they were categorized from Western articles and the other accumulated from Eastern web news articles.

2. The frequency (raw count) of conceptual metaphors along with the types of framing they contribute to were presented in tabular form to illustrate the overall distribution within both datasets.
3. Since the size of the datasets was not equal, the raw counts were converted to percentages by applying normalization technique to facilitate comparability. This aligns with standard practice for ensuring data comparability across datasets (Robinson, 2010). The normalized percentages were then illustrated in both tabular and graphical forms.
4. Subsequently, a chi-square test of independence was applied with the aim of testing the null hypothesis stating, there was no significant difference present between the distributions of framing types across the Western and Eastern datasets. This test was selected because it is ideal for evaluating relationships between categorical variables without assuming parametric distribution (McHugh, 2013).
5. To further highlight the framing categories that exhibited a significant difference, a post-hoc residual analysis with Bonferroni correction was employed. It is a significant addition because it controls type I errors across comparisons (Armstrong, 2014).
6. Conclusively, a brief comparative interpretation was added to explain the trends depicted by the statistical tests, which exhibited the varied prevalence of incorporation of framing types among the Western and Eastern datasets.

4. Data Analysis

After identifying and enlisting the conceptual metaphors in both Western and Eastern web news articles and examining their contributions to Entman's (1993) five types of framing in the preliminary step, this section aims to compare and contrast the framing patterns employed by the media outlets of the two regions. This comparative analysis seeks to elaborate the regional differences in incorporating reporting strategies and public persuasion techniques.

Datasets Overview

The research examined 70 web news articles related to Israel-Palestine conflict, comprising of 35 web news articles from Western sources and 35 web news articles from Eastern sources. In the Western dataset, a total of 46 metaphorical instances were identified, whereas the Eastern dataset consisted of 57 conceptual metaphors. The difference in frequency necessitates normalization in order to compare the distribution of framing types among Western and Eastern datasets.

Frequency Distribution of Conceptual Metaphors

Table 5.1: Frequency of Source Articles and Metaphorical Instances

Region	Number of Articles	Total Metaphorical Instances
Western	35	46
Eastern	35	57

The distribution of metaphorical instances across framing types in both Western and Eastern sources is presented in table 5.2

Table 5.2: Raw Count of Metaphors in Western and Eastern Articles

Framing Type	Western Frequency	Eastern Frequency
Emotional/Empathy framing	8	18
Conflict framing	3	11
Moral Evaluation framing	9	8

Agency & Attribution framing	7	15
Complexity/Simplification framing	19	5
Total	46	57

Method of Comparison

To ensure a valid comparative analysis, the frequency of conceptual metaphors contributing to each framing type in both datasets was normalized to percentages. This technique facilitates a direct comparison, irrespective of the total number of metaphors integrated by Western and Eastern sources. The following formula was applied to calculate the percentage for each framing type:

$$\text{Percentage of framing type} = \frac{\text{Number of metaphors in category}}{\text{Total metaphors in dataset}} \times 100$$

Percentage Distribution of Conceptual Metaphors

For the purpose of an insightful comparison, the raw counts presented in table 5.2 were converted into percentages by employing normalization formula. Percentage distribution of framing types is summarized in table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Percentage distribution of Western and Eastern framing types

Framing Type	Western %	Eastern %
Emotional/Empathy framing	17.4	31.6
Conflict framing	6.5	19.3
Moral Evaluation framing	19.6	14.0
Agency & Attribution framing	15.2	26.3
Complexity/Simplification framing	41.3	8.8

Percentage distribution of framing types in Western and eastern web news articles illustrated through a bar chart in Figure 5.1

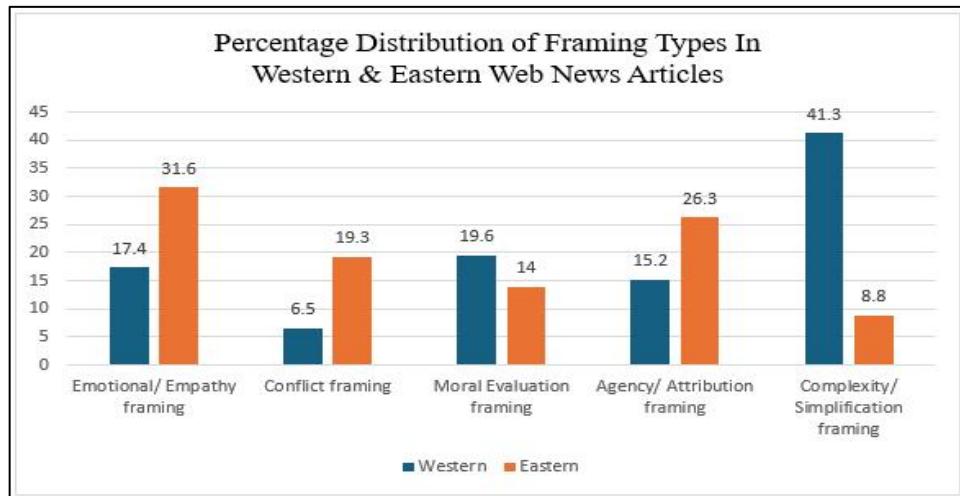


Figure 5.1 Percentage distribution of framing types

Figure 5.1 illustrates that Eastern outlets' employment of emotional empathy framing accounts 31.6% in comparison to the Western sources that have a percentage of 17.4. Similarly, the Eastern outlets exhibit 19.3% usage of conflict framing which is relatively higher than Western

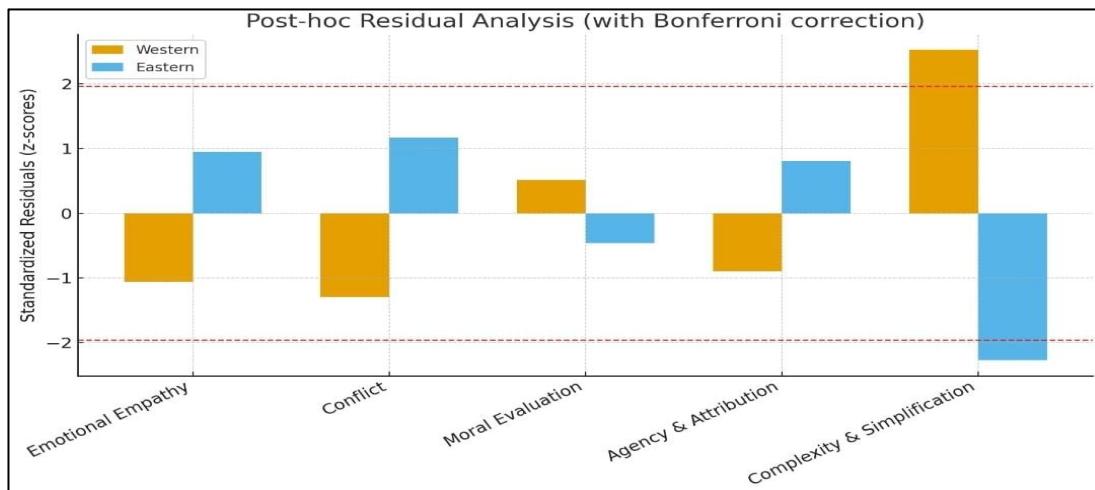


Figure 5.2 *Post-Hoc Residual Analysis with Bonferroni Correction*

tendency of 6.5%. Furthermore, moral evaluation framing type can be observed to be distributed at a relatively balanced percentage, i.e., 19.6% employment in Western sample whereas, 14% incorporation in Eastern dataset. In case of agency and attribution framing technique, it can be noted that Eastern outlets show a relatively higher percentage of 26.3% with respect to Western tendency of 15.2%. Lastly, Western outlets showcase a tilt toward simplification framing, making up to 41.3% of metaphorical usage, meanwhile Eastern dataset incorporates it in only 8.8% cases.

Statistical Significance Testing

Previously recorded percentage distribution provided an initial indication of distinctions among the Western and Eastern datasets; however statistical testing was required to ascertain whether these variations were significant. The supposed null hypothesis (H_0) suggested that there would be no statistical difference in the distribution of metaphorical framing types among the two datasets. For the purpose of testing this, a chi-square test of independence was employed. The outcomes illustrated a statistically significant relation, $\chi^2 (4, N = 103) = 18.589$, $p = 0.00095$, resulting in the rejection of null hypothesis. Furthermore, post-hoc residual analysis with Bonferroni correction indicated that Western outlets incorporated significantly more simplification framing type, meanwhile Eastern sources relied significantly more on employing emotional/empathy framing type than expected. It can be noted that Eastern reporting focuses on highlighting human-centered depictions and contrastively, the Western portrayals showcase a stronger preference for analytical or objective framings. These findings, also illustrated in figure 5.2, exhibit that the Western and Eastern datasets not only differ descriptively but also statistically.

Analytical Overview

The chi-square test paired with post-hoc residual analysis establishes that the comparative examination of conceptual metaphors across Western and Eastern news sources indicates distinct inclinations with reference to framing Israel-Palestine conflict. It can be observed that the Eastern sources demonstrate a significant tilt toward emotional and empathy framing, with 31.6% of metaphorical expressions contributing to this type, meanwhile, Western sources exhibited a 17.4% incorporation of emotional and empathy framing type. This distinction reveals that Eastern digital news outlets give precedence to engaging the audiences' emotional response, often focusing on the depiction of human suffering, emotions and personal challenges of the

Israel-Palestine conflict. Moreover, Eastern outlets also aim to engage their audience emotionally for the purpose of shaping their opinion subtly and contrastively, the Western outlets might prefer to concentrate on analytical and detached interpretations. In contrast to previous tendencies, Western ones showcase a marked tilt toward simplification framing, making up to 41.3% of metaphorical usage, meanwhile Eastern outlets incorporate it in only 8.8% cases. Such observation reveals Western outlets' preference for downplaying and distilling complex narratives, portraying the conflict as inevitable or beyond immediate control. Another underlying reason may be their aim for concise, digestible reporting, simplifying the complex and overwhelming narratives to be more 'manageable' for the audience. Considering their detached journalistic style, this disposition also aligns with their low inclination towards emotional/empathy framing as opposed to Eastern Outlets. The remaining three of the framing types exhibit more moderate differences but still offer insightful information. Moral evaluation framing can be observed to be distributed at a relatively balanced percentage, i.e., 19.6% employment in Western sample whereas, 14% incorporation in Eastern dataset. Such proportional exhibition indicates that both Western and Eastern outlets considered standard journalistic practices and conveyed the normative judgments of parties involved realistically given that overemphasizing the evaluations might make the reports seem biased. In case of employing conflict framing, it is evident that Eastern sources emphasized more on this type, accounting 19.3% as opposed to 6.5% exhibition by Western outlets. The news outlets perhaps seek to avoid repetitive and sensationalist portrayals of conflicts, which might be a plausible explanation for why this type is not frequently illustrated as compared to others. As for agency and attribution framing, it can be noted that Eastern outlets have a relatively higher percentage of 26.3% with respect to Western tendency of 15.2%. In line with earlier observations of Eastern reporting style, the percentage reflects their focus on constructing and conveying clear narratives, with defined actors, protagonists and villains. Furthermore, it complements the emotional framing tilt of the Eastern sources, making the narratives easier to follow and emotionally engaging.

5. Summary of Results

With the aim of answering the research question, how do the conceptual metaphors differ in their framing techniques across various Eastern and Western news articles, the statistical comparison of the two datasets revealed a significant difference in the distribution of metaphors with reference to framing Israel-Palestine conflict. It was observed that the Eastern sources demonstrated a significant tilt toward emotional and empathy framing, with 31.6% of metaphorical expressions contributing to this type, meanwhile, Western sources exhibited a 17.4% incorporation of emotional and empathy framing type. Similarly, the Eastern outlets exhibited 19.3% usage of conflict framing which is relatively higher than Western tendency of 6.5%. Furthermore, moral evaluation framing type was noted to be distributed at a relatively balanced percentage, i.e., 19.6% employment in Western sample whereas, 14% incorporation in Eastern dataset. In case of agency and attribution framing technique, the Eastern outlets showed a relatively higher percentage of 26.3% with respect to Western tendency of 15.2%. Lastly, Western outlets showcased a tilt toward simplification framing, making up to 41.3% of metaphorical usage, meanwhile Eastern dataset incorporates it in only 8.8% cases. also, divergence highlights not only journalistic tendencies but also broader regional differences in the communication of the Israel-Palestine issue, which are explored further in the discussion.

6. Discussion:

With the aim to situate the findings within the broader field of media discourse studies, this research demonstrates that conceptual metaphors incorporated in web news articles

related to Israel-Palestine conflict are not merely stylistic but play a central role in reinforcing framing strategies. By analyzing their contribution to framing, this study highlights the subtle ways media discourse influences public perception of global conflicts.

While reviewing the existing literature related to the variables of this research, it was observed that several studies have examined media coverage and narrative bias with reference to Israel-Palestine conflict, however certain aspects remain underexplored. This discussion addresses those areas by positioning the current findings in relation to prior research.

This research's findings align with previous studies which have analyzed the role of framing in digital media coverage related to Israel-Palestine conflict (Awartani, 2021; Ali et al., 2024). Consistent with these studies, this analysis reaffirms that digital news media outlets employ selective framing techniques to construct and report particular interpretations of narratives. This substantiates the significance of framing in influencing and shaping public opinion regarding conflicts. Although these existing studies focused on framing in more general terms, the present research extends this line of investigation by providing a layered analysis including five distinct types of frames. Furthermore, the integration of conceptual metaphors within the discussion of framing demonstrates how the metaphorical expressions deepen the interpretive dimensions of media coverage. This establishes that framing is not merely a matter of emphasis or selection but rather is a cognitive process directed by metaphorical associations. This approach not only enriches theoretical understanding of framing but also has practical significance given that it facilitates the journalists, scholars and readers to recognize the rhetorical devices such as conceptual metaphors that shape conflict narratives and fosters a more critical and informed engagement with conflict coverage of Israel-Palestine.

Carrying the discussion forward, the key findings of this study correspond with the viewpoint of some earlier researchers who examined the persuasive role of conceptual metaphors in political discourse. Zanaty (2024) analyzed a political speech regarding Israel-Palestine conflict whereas, Wei (2001) explored Taiwanese electoral discourse. The outcomes of both these studies demonstrated that conceptual metaphors are strategically incorporated with the purpose of shaping and manipulating audience's perceptions. The current research validates this pivotal inference by illustrating likewise that metaphoric structures are impactful rhetorical devices incorporated to report conflicts. Moreover, this research advances the discussion by positioning conceptual metaphors in the broader context of media framing. By establishing that the conceptual metaphors do not operate in isolation only but rather contribute to the construction of various framing types, the study reveals how audience's perception is influenced in a more systematic and multifaceted ways. This perspective underscores the significance of employing various linguistic elements in framing analysis in order to enhance the understanding of media bias and framing strategies, offer information about critical media literacy and provide a framework for examining persuasive power of metaphors in global political discourse.

The outcomes of Bhowmik and Fisher's (2023) study illustrate that American media coverage of Israel-Palestine conflict, specifically CNN was observed to rely heavily on violence-oriented imagery, leading to neglect of principles of peace journalism. In contrast to this observation, the present research suggests a different pattern. After identifying and analyzing conceptual metaphors and their contribution to framing types across a broader Western dataset, the examination revealed that digital media outlets such as CNN showcased a marked inclination towards employing simplification framing instead of graphic portrayals or emotionally charged reporting. Furthermore, statistical testing substantiated this pattern and revealed that simplification frames appeared with significantly greater frequency in Western sources as

compared to Eastern outlets, which focus more on incorporating emotional/empathy or agency/attribution framing types. The difference in Bhowmik and Fisher's (2023) analytical lens might be a plausible reason for this divergence because they explored CNN's coverage through the standpoint of peace journalism whereas this research highlighted how conceptual metaphors operate within framing strategies. Overall, these findings indicate that Western media coverage focuses less on dramatizing the conflict by incorporating vivid, emotionally charged, violent imagery and rather prefers to downplay it through simplified reporting. This contrasts with the earlier claims that highlighted the use of violence-oriented reporting and offers a more nuanced understanding of CNN's coverage style.

Several literary works address the regional biases in shaping and framing the news related to Israel-Palestine conflict. Failla (2023) and Shahzad et al. (2023) have also conducted comparative studies regarding the portrayal of Israel-Palestine conflict. Building upon these two comparative studies, this research extends their observations substantially. Both prior investigations offered valuable confirmation that Western digital media outlets i.e., *CNN*, *BBC*, *The Time*, *The Wall Street Journal* showcased an inclination toward pro-Israel reporting, contrastively the Arab outlets such as *Al-Jazeera* illustrated pro-Palestinian standpoint (with *RT* exhibiting a tilt closer to neutrality). Despite being insightful, such findings presented broad dichotomies, offering a reduced understanding of framing dynamics as a yes/no bias classification. In contrast, the current research incorporated a wider and more balanced dataset, comprising of web news articles from ten leading outlets (five each) to have representation from both Western and Eastern news outlets equally. Furthermore, the employment of mixed-method design consisting of qualitative analysis of conceptual metaphors and their contribution to framing types paired with quantitative testing, provided interpretive depth and statistical weight in order to guarantee the descriptive and empirical validity of the results.

This research advances the field by moving beyond the simple bifurcation of "which side" media outlets align with and rather uncovers the specific rhetorical mechanisms such as conceptual metaphors which are incorporated to construct, frame and communicate news narratives. By systematically categorizing how conceptual metaphors contribute to five distinct framing types i.e., emotional/empathy, agency/attribution, complexity/simplification, moral evaluation and conflict framing, the findings of this study highlight the patterns that were previously overlooked. It was observed that Western outlets prefer to downplay and distill complex narratives, portraying the conflict as inevitable or beyond immediate control. Considering their detached journalistic style, this disposition also aligns with their low inclination towards emotional/empathy framing as opposed to Eastern Outlets. This distinction also reveals that Eastern digital news outlets give precedence to engaging the audiences' emotional response, often focusing on the depiction of human suffering, emotions and personal challenges of the Israel-Palestine conflict. These insights not only demonstrate the statistically significant distinctions across Western and Eastern coverage styles but also highlight how subtle rhetorical devices like conceptual metaphors, influence public's perception of the Israel-Palestine conflict. These findings significantly add to the existing body of research by showing that grounding framing analysis in metaphorical structures leads to deeper insights into the ideological and affective dimensions of international reporting, as compared to mere binary assessments of media bias.

7. Conclusion

This research paper aimed to examine how conceptual metaphors contribute to framing types across Western and Eastern media discourses related to Israel-Palestine conflict. By integrating

qualitative insights with quantitative validation, the study identified the conceptual metaphors incorporated in news articles along with their ideological contributions to framing types. By integrating the two analytical frameworks, conceptual metaphor theory and framing analysis, a major gap was bridged. In addition, the comparative analysis revealed the statistically significant differences between Western and Eastern reporting tendencies.

Although the study had some inevitable limitations i.e., word limit and methodological scope, it demonstrates the value of approaching media discourse utilizing this dual lens. The key findings not only add to already existing body of literature related to Israel-Palestine conflict, metaphors and framing but also establishes new grounds for comparative media research with reference to conflict reporting. In its entirety, this work foregrounds the power of language, which is embedded in subtle ways with the aim of shaping perception.

8. Implications

- This research establishes that conceptual metaphors are not merely stylistic elements but fundamental tools, functioning to shape framing strategies. The depiction that conceptual metaphors directly contribute to framing types extends the discourse analysis, integrating conceptual metaphors and frames which are usually treated as isolated areas.
- By conducting a balanced Western-Eastern media portrayal comparison with multiple sources from each side, this study provides a more reliable and nuanced account of cross-cultural reporting. The research highlighted statistically significant and distinct reporting tendencies, illustrating Western Media's tilt towards simplification framing whereas, Eastern outlets foregrounded emotional/empathy framing approach. Such findings shed light on cultural/ideological reporting styles that were previously underexplored.
- Integration of qualitative examination and categorization of conceptual metaphors and the framing types they contribute to with quantitative comparative validation, strengthens the reliability of discourse studies. Application of the chi-square test paired with post-hoc residual analysis adds empirical weight, confirming that the distinctions observed among Western and Eastern media sources are not anecdotal but statistically significant.
- Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of critical media literacy by revealing how subtle linguistic tools such as conceptual metaphors are strategically used to frame conflicts. These insights are vital for readers, journalists and educators in recognizing the persuasive power of language in shaping public opinion.

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Appendices

Appendix A

List of Sampled News Articles from Western Sources

1. The Guardian - *Israel vows complete siege of Gaza as it strikes the Palestinian territory after incursion by Hamas* (October 9, 2023)
2. The Guardian - *'The street was a pool of blood': Gaza witnesses one of most violent weeks since first months of war* (July 14, 2024)
3. The Guardian - *The EU faces a moment of truth. Will it follow through on trade sanctions on Israel - or slide into irrelevance?* (June 2, 2025)
4. The Guardian - *If the horrors unfolding in Gaza are not a red line for Australia to take stronger action, then I don't know what is* (May 30, 2025)
5. The Guardian - *The turning point that wasn't: the way the world talks about Israel's war has changed. Nothing else has* (May 26, 2025)
6. The Guardian - *'The world does not care if we all die': hunger and despair in the ruins of Gaza City* (May 25, 2025)
7. The Guardian - *The UK has spoken out against the 'monstrous' human catastrophe in Gaza. Why won't Australia do more?* (May 21, 2025)
8. BBC News - *Israeli strikes across Gaza kill at least 50, Palestinian officials say* (April 25, 2025)
9. BBC News - *UK sanctions far-right Israeli ministers for 'inciting violence' against Palestinians* (June 10, 2025)
10. BBC News - *Hamas faces leadership vacuum at critical time with demise of Gaza 'War Council'* (June 12, 2025)

11. BBC News - *Netanyahu confirms Israel arming clans opposed to Hamas in Gaza* (June 5, 2025)
12. BBC News - *Gaza warehouse broken into by 'hordes of hungry people', says WFP* (May 29, 2025)
13. BBC News - *Gaza now worse than hell on earth, humanitarian chief tells BBC* (June 4, 2025)
14. BBC News - *Netanyahu accuses Starmer of being on 'wrong side of humanity' and siding with Hamas* (May 23, 2025)
15. CNN - *Controversial new Gaza aid group isn't screening recipients - despite being established to keep supplies from Hamas* (May 30, 2025)
16. CNN - *'It haunts me daily:' Freed Israeli hostages fear for those still held captive by Hamas* (May 28, 2025)
17. CNN - *Israel ramps up strikes in Gaza, killing dozens, as Trump floats 'freedom zone'* (May 15, 2025)
18. CNN - *Israel vows to escalate war with new plan to 'conquer' Gaza* (May 6, 2025)
19. CNN - *Netanyahu calls defeating Israel's enemies the 'supreme objective,' not freeing hostages* (May 1, 2025)
20. CNN - *Senior Hamas leaders depart Cairo following ceasefire talks as Trump says 'We've got to be good to Gaza'* (April 27, 2025)
21. CNN - *Israel acknowledges killing aid worker in strike after initially accusing UN of 'baseless slander'* (date not provided)
22. Reuters - *War-weary Gazans share images of destruction in Israel* (June 16, 2025)
23. Reuters - *Netanyahu says Israel will control Gaza as pressure mounts on aid* (May 19, 2025)
24. Reuters - *After airstrikes, Israel says it has launched new ground operation in Gaza* (March 19, 2025)
25. Reuters - *UN says priority must be easing Gaza suffering, warns security poses aid challenge* (January 16, 2025)
26. Reuters - *Israel's aid access to Gaza insufficient, offensive must stop, France says* (May 20, 2025)
27. Reuters - *Conditions in Gaza are catastrophic despite renewed aid, UN says* (May 31, 2025)
28. Reuters - *Airstrikes kill dozens in Gaza, international criticism of Israel grows* (May 21, 2025)
29. Fox News - *Ceasefire over as Israel strikes Gaza after Hamas refused to release hostages, officials say* (March 17, 2025)
30. Fox News - *UN blames Israelis for attack on compound but doesn't mention Hamas, says forced to reduce Gaza footprint* (March 24, 2025)
31. Fox News - *Israeli minister says Gaza will be 'entirely destroyed,' Palestinians forced into other countries* (May 6, 2025)
32. Fox News - *Anti- Israel, pro- Palestinian protests 'cheapen the concept of genocide,' says Jewish historian and author* (May 13, 2024)
33. Fox News - *Former Israeli government spokesperson warns country is in an 'impossible bind' in Gaza* (May 27, 2025)
34. Fox News - *Israeli ambassador slams UN's 'mafia-like' tactics against US- backed Gaza foundation* (May 28, 2025)
35. Fox News - *Hamas working to 'sabotage' Trump-backed aid group with 'fake news': Israeli official* (June 5, 2025)

Appendix B

List of Sampled News Articles from Eastern Sources

1. Al Jazeera - *Israel bombs northern Gaza house killing 13 children amid ongoing siege* (November 10, 2024)
2. Al Jazeera - *UN chief says Palestinians in Gaza in 'death loop', demands end to blockade* (April 8, 2025)
3. Al Jazeera - *Punched, choked, kicked: German police crack down on student protests* (May 25, 2024)
4. Al Jazeera - *'He's breathing': My two hours under Gaza's rubble after an Israeli strike* (December 31, 2023)
5. Al Jazeera - *Gaza's youngest influencer among children killed by Israel in last two days* (May 25, 2025)
6. Al Jazeera - *More than 30 killed in Israeli attacks across Gaza as hospital hit again* (November 5, 2024)
7. Al Jazeera - *Gaza is burning. UK NGOs must abandon failed diplomacy and fight back* (April 23, 2025)
8. Dawn News - *Israel imposes total siege on Gaza, cuts off water supply as dozens more Palestinians killed* (October 9, 2023)
9. Dawn News - *6,000 bombs rained on Gaza in five days* (October 13, 2023)
10. Dawn News - *Averting a catastrophe* (October 7, 2024)
11. Dawn News - *Gazans bombarded by Israel have no hope and no escape* (October 12, 2023)
12. Dawn News - *Eight Israeli soldiers killed as Hezbollah 'repels' infiltration* (October 3, 2024)
13. Dawn News - *US warns Israel not to repeat Gaza ruination* (October 10, 2024)
14. Dawn News - *Israel vows to launch Rafah assault 'with or without truce'* (May 1, 2024)
15. Tehran Times - *Gaza holocaust* (October 11, 2023)
16. Tehran Times - *Israel turns north Gaza into death zone* (October 27, 2024)
17. Tehran Times - *Israeli news outlet admits ethnic cleansing in northern Gaza* (November 10, 2024)
18. Tehran Times - *Why Gazans have been chosen as Person of The Year* (March 17, 2024)
19. Tehran Times - *Thirst for genocide* (November 16, 2024)
20. Tehran Times - *Global protests in solidarity with Gaza heat up* (April 18, 2025)
21. Tehran Times - *Architect of 'Generals' Plan' to depopulate northern Gaza admits 'absolute failure'* (February 14, 2025)
22. MEE News - *Israel starts 2025 by massacring Palestinians in Gaza* (January 1, 2025)
23. MEE News - *Israeli forces kill 80 Palestinians in ambushes on Gaza aid centres* (June 17, 2025)
24. MEE News - *'Execution site': Palestinians face death collecting food at US-Israeli Gaza aid points* (June 17, 2025)
25. MEE News - *BBC coverage of Israel's war on Gaza 'systematically biased against Palestinians'* (June 17, 2025)
26. MEE News - *Scenes of horror in Gaza as Palestinian child tries to escape the flames after school attack* (May 26, 2025)
27. MEE News - *War on Gaza: Israeli attack on Al-Aqsa Hospital burns Palestinians alive* (October 14, 2024)

28. MEE News - '*She saw them burn': Gaza girl 'devastated' after family killed in Israeli strike* (May 27, 2025)
29. Anadolu Ajansi - *Dispute between Israel, Palestine turned into conflict between oppressors and oppressed: Türkiye* (April 26, 2024)
30. Anadolu Ajansi - '*We reject any plan that forces Palestinians to leave their homeland': Turkish foreign minister* (April 12, 2025)
31. Anadolu Ajansi - '*After decades of oppression, Palestinians in Gaza now faced with genocide': South African president* (April 11, 2024)
32. Anadolu Ajansi - *Israel's oppression of Palestinians 'crime against humanity': Report* (January 12, 2024)
33. Anadolu Ajansi - *UN accuses Israel of committing genocidal acts through 'systematic destruction' of reproductive healthcare facilities* (March 13, 2025)
34. Anadolu Ajansi - *Israel's war in northern Gaza aimed at uprooting people from their land: Palestinian National Council* (October 25, 2024)
35. Anadolu Ajansi - *Palestinians' use of force to resist foreign oppression 'well founded' in international law: China* (May 21, 2024)