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A Conceptual Metaphor Analysis of Reports on the Killing of a Hamas Leader, Yahya Sinwar

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Abstract

This study investigates the conceptual metaphors in *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*'s news reports on the murder of Hamas Leader, Yahya Sinwar. The reports were published in both media outlets within a month after the assassination in October 2024. This study attempts to compare the conceptual metaphors utilized in the two media outlets and to identify how they influence discourse in a manner that reveals media bias toward the opposing parties. The study maintains Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and adopts the metaphor identification procedure to identify metaphorical lexical units. The collected data are further examined using Chateris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis to discover the way conceptual metaphors influence discourse to convey media predisposition. The results show that both media outlets utilized three parallel target domains: THE MURDER, THE CONFLICT, and YAHYA SINWAR. However, the source domains display divergent results indicating bias, with *The New York Times* leaning toward supporting Israel, while *Al Jazeera* chooses to uphold the positive image of Yahya Sinwar. Further research could investigate the utilization of contextual metaphors across a broader selection of articles and the degree to which media outlets deliberately utilize the metaphors in their reports.

Keywords: *Al Jazeera Media, Conceptual and Critical Metaphor Analysis, The murder of a Hamas Leader, The New York Times, Yahya Sinwar.*

Introduction

The utilization of metaphors as one of linguistic devices as an instrument for conveying more powerful messages has become increasingly common and widely used in online media outlets. Metaphor has been ordinarily understood based on the notion of 'similarity' or 'comparison' between the literal and figurative meaning of a word or expression (Ungerer and Schmid, ch.6). Nowadays, metaphor is not merely utilized as a cognitive linguistic device which is decorative in articles; but also plays a crucial role in how individuals conceptualize complex and abstract issues (Hesse, ch.4). Metaphors guide our subconscious thinking and reasoning about emotion, society, human character, language, and the nature of life and death (Lakoff and Johnson, ch.3). It is indispensable not only to our imagination, but also to our reason. Thus, their presence will inevitably shape the discourse constructed (Caballero, ch.3).



Previous studies have been investigating the metaphor existence in various media. Conceptual metaphors were investigated in the business column of *The Jakarta Post* (Prana, ch.3). The study shows that conceptual metaphors are used by the news media to illustrate that business is a game that requires strategy, while finance is a building structure with a specific framework, and investment is a battle that involves losing or winning. Another study (Sari, ch.4) examined the conceptual metaphor utilization in Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem in *Al Jazeera* news articles. The result shows that **the recognition** is portrayed as the cause of heat and a form of adversary. Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory served as the theoretical framework in both studies mentioned.

This study also maintains Lakoff and Johnson theory to identify and interpret conceptual metaphors utilized in media outlets. It is explained that conceptual metaphor can be understood as a transfer from one concept (source domain) to another concept (target domain) to create a better understanding by the existence of comparison between two domains (Lakoff and Johnson, ch.2). Domain is the ontological traits associated with a specific idea or entity (McGlone, ch.2). Source domain, in this sense, refers to a concrete or familiar domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn (McGlone, ch.2). It provides the structure for understanding an abstract concept, which is the target domain. For example, in the metaphor "time is money", time is metaphorically understood as a valuable resource that can be spent, saved, invested, or wasted, just like money (Mueller, ch.3). In this example, money is the source domain and time is the target domain.

In the context of conflict reporting, metaphors — when analyzed by Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) proposed by Jonathan Charteris-Black — can simplify, clarify, or obscure the reality of events being discussed in the articles. In other words, they can influence readers' interpretations in profound ways on discourse formation (Spivey, ch.2). Discourse refers to the use of language in speech and writing to construct meaning and convey ideology, particularly in a way that reflects and reinforces power relations in society (Charteris-Black, ch.3). The metaphorical frameworks used in media reporting can significantly impact the discourse formation by shaping what is considered legitimate knowledge and by influencing the emotional and intellectual responses of readers (Kitis and Milapides, ch.4).

The murder of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, a highly controversial geopolitical issue, serves as an ideal case study for examining metaphorical frameworks set by media outlets. The murder is characterized not only by military engagements and political negotiations, but also by a battle of narratives. How different media outlets presenting the conflict narratives can significantly influence international opinion and public emotions (Tiripelli, ch.2). *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*, two globally recognized media organizations with high engagements, are often seen as representatives of distinct perspectives on international affairs (Carlson, ch.3). *The New York Times*, based in the United States, is regarded as a western media outlet and often influenced by the geopolitical alignment of western government, including the United States' strong ties and support to Israel (Maalej, ch.3). In contrast, *Al Jazeera*, based in Qatar, is a well-known media outlet in the Middle Eastern and is often perceived as more sympathetic



to Hamas (Sari, ch.4). Thus, it is presumed that the two media outlets appear to present the same case from opposing perspectives.

This paper, which utilized the murder of Yahya Sinwar articles as its corpus, is written due to a deep concern for the humanitarian issue arising from the Israel-Hamas conflict, which has been complicated by the proliferation of narratives shaped by various international media, including their journalistic bias, such as *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*. Thus, by selecting this topic to analyze, this research aims provide a deeper understanding of conceptual metaphor utilization in the murder of Yahya Sinwar reporting.

Previous research conducted by Eldin and colleagues (2) and Maalej (3) primarily examined the use of metaphors in the Israel-Hamas conflict reports. By analyzing news articles that spotlighted the opinions of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas from April to September 2023, Eldin et al. (3) demonstrated that the use of metaphors in this context deeply reflected their respective narratives and strategic objectives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ultimately revealing contrasting worldviews. Maalej (7) stated that metaphors were used by those in power (Maalej: Israeli officials and sympathizers) to cast a negative spotlight on Palestinians by employing dehumanizing to them through metaphors.

Unlike previous research, this study examines the metaphorical frameworks in media outlets under the topic the murder of Yahya Sinwar. It is a topic that has not been addressed before, and therefore, serves as a gap in the field of Israel-Hamas war. By examining and deconstructing metaphorical choices surrounding the murder of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar reports in *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*, this study aims to address the questions:

1. What conceptual metaphors were utilized in the murder of Yahya Sinwar articles in *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*?
2. How do conceptual metaphors shape the discourse in a way that reflects media bias toward conflicting parties?

Method

This qualitative study employs Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) to examine the conceptual metaphors in the media coverage of Yahya Sinwar's assassination by *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*. CMA is a method for examining how metaphors are used in public and political discourse formation to shape perceptions, attitudes, and ideologies describes (Charteris-Black, ch.2). It aims to uncover the relationship between metaphorical language, power, and social influence. In this study, the term **power** refers to the media outlets with high engagement that can influence public opinion and construct narratives supporting particular interests.

Prior to CMA, the data collection was done through online searching by typing the keyword "Yahya Sinwar Murder" on *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* websites. Five related articles were selected from each media outlet. The articles, all published in October 2024, were selected through purposive sampling method to ensure that the discourse impacted by metaphors in each report is comparable, allowing for an in-depth analysis of metaphorical framing in a similar context.



According to Charteris-Black (147), CMA involves three stages in its analysis: (1) identifying metaphors, (2) interpreting their meanings in context, and (3) explaining their potential effects on discourse. In the first stage, the selected articles were read thoroughly and all conceptual metaphor expressions were extracted from the articles. The extraction of conceptual metaphor utilized the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) based on Group (2). This procedure recognized conceptual metaphors by comparing the literal meaning and figurative meaning. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD) was used to find basic meanings of each word in the conceptual metaphor.

Next, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson was utilized to highlight the **source domain** and **target domain** of each metaphor in selected articles. The source domain classification was determined by identifying metaphorical expressions in context and mapping them to familiar conceptual structures based on Lakoff and Johnson's theory. Each metaphor was analyzed by observing how the target domain was described using concrete language that frames the event metaphorically. Since metaphor is a process of transferring concept from a source domain to a target domain, each piece of data was examined individually to identify its source and target domains. Thus, each target domain was paired with a source domain. Each pair was instrumental in determining the concept transfer schema used in conceptual metaphors by each media outlet and how the target domains were represented through their respective source domains. The underlying structure of metaphorical framing in the discourse were analyzed through these pairings.

Finally, all data were quantified according to the domain pairing pattern. The dominant pairing patterns found in each media outlet were analyzed through the historical and social context of the Israel-Hamas conflict. This step was taken to provide a contextual understanding of each conceptual metaphor. Understanding the context of each metaphor is essential, considering that every word carries a specific meaning depending on its context. Even two identical words can have different interpretations depending on how they are used within the context.

Results and Discussion

The Utilization of Conceptual Metaphors in The New York Times and Al Jazeera articles on the Murder of Yahya Sinwar

The conceptual metaphors utilized in *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* articles on the murder of Yahya Sinwar are discussed independently to give a clear picture of their usage in each media outlet. The results of the conceptual metaphor analysis of the said media outlets are outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 shows the utilization of conceptual metaphors in five selected articles of *The New York Times*. It lists 15 source domains that pair with 3 target domains, i.e., the murder of Yahya Sinwar or THE MURDER, the conflict of Israel-Hamas or THE CONFLICT and YAHYA SINWAR. The table also includes the frequency of occurrence of the conceptual metaphors in the news reports. A sample sentence selected from *The New York Times*



articles is provided to exemplify how the 15 source domains are identified and paired with the 3 target domains. Each sample sentence only illustrates the underlined metaphorical word or phrase represented by the pairing pattern of a source domain and a target domain.

**Table 1:
The Conceptual Metaphors and their Frequency of Occurrence in The New York Times**

Source Domain	Target Domain	<i>n</i>
JOURNEY	THE MURDER	9
THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY	THE MURDER	6
WAR	THE MURDER	4
VICTORY	THE MURDER	3
STRATEGY	THE MURDER	3
GAME	THE MURDER	2
THE CAUSE OF HEAT	THE MURDER	2
COUNTER ATTACK	THE MURDER	2
SYMBOLISM	THE MURDER	1
THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE	THE MURDER	1
COVER	THE MURDER	1
TRAP	THE MURDER	1
WAR	THE CONFLICT	3
BURDEN	THE CONFLICT	1
THE CAUSE OF HEAT	YAHYA SINWAR	2
TOTAL		41

1. THE MURDER AS JOURNEY

“The death of Sinwar is a **culminating** moment.” (Article 3)

2. THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY

“Mr. Sinwar’s killing was a powerful **blow** to a violent organization that had already been gravely damaged by a year of brutal combat with Israel.” (Article 5)

3. THE MURDER AS WAR

“We must continue with all our strength until **the total victory**.” (Article 1)

4. THE MURDER AS VICTORY

“Assassinating Yahya Sinwar was Israel’s Osama bin Laden **Moment**.” (Article 1)

5. THE MURDER AS STRATEGY

“Israel’s killing of the Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar is the newest manifestation of that century-old **premise**.” (Article 3)



6. THE MURDER AS GAME
“To change **the rules** of the game.” (Article 1)
7. THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT
“It **evoked** Israel’s recent assassinations of Hezbollah leaders.” (Article 3)
8. THE MURDER AS COUNTER ATTACK
“After Hezbollah refused to end cross-border attacks this summer, Israel **responded** by killing most of its commanders” (Article 3)
9. THE MURDER AS SYMBOLISM
“The **banner** will not fall.” (Article 4)
10. THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE
“Those blows have never prevented Hamas from **rebounding**.” (Article 5)
11. THE MURDER AS COVER
“The two-state solution is a **fig leaf**.” (Article 2)
12. THE MURDER AS TRAP
“They also thought that the body of one fighter, later identified as Mr. Sinwar, was **booby-trapped**.” (Article 4)
13. THE CONFLICT AS WAR
“Israel has **pursued** the most devastating war in its history.” (Article 3)
14. THE CONFLICT AS BURDEN
“The most difficult thing in the world is to be a **moderate** Palestinian.” (Article 2)
15. YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT
“Israel’s security establishment gathered mounds of intelligence in its hunt for Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas leader who was an **architect** of the Oct. 7 attacks.” (Article 4)

In the 5 selected articles, 41 conceptual metaphors are utilized to describe the murder of Yahya Sinwar’s murder, which occurred in October 2024. Of the 41 data, the three target domains were paired with several source domains, including JOURNEY, THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY, WAR, VICTORY, STRATEGY, GAME, THE CAUSE OF HEAT, COUNTER ATTACK, SYMBOLISM, THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE, COVER, TRAP, and BURDEN. There are 6 source domains that occupy the highest frequency of occurrence. They are: THE MURDER AS JOURNEY (9 data), THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY (6 data), THE MURDER AS WAR (4 data), THE MURDER AS VICTORY (3 data), THE MURDER AS STRATEGY (3 data), and THE CONFLICT AS WAR (3 data). The frequency of occurrence of the remaining 9 pairing patterns remains insignificant as they only appear in one or two data.

There were several basic principles promulgated by the murder of Yahya Sinwar reports on *The New York Times*. Firstly, the murder of Yahya Sinwar has been linked to a particular point in a long journey. In other words, the murder of Yahya Sinwar is not the only iconic point in the whole Israel-Hamas war. This was related to the utilization of THE MURDER AS JOURNEY. In the example “The death of Sinwar is a **culminating moment**”, the word **culminating** metaphorically frames his death as the high point or decisive event in an ongoing sequence. It suggests that his assassination is a significant milestone but not necessarily the final event in the broader Israel-Hamas conflict.

Since Yahya Sinwar is the leader of Hamas organization, it is obvious that his murder case leads to the second founding principle of THE MURDER, which is to cause great impacts on Hamas organization and Palestine as a state. According to *The New York Times*, THE MURDER brought about a negative change to Palestinians. This image was effectively conveyed by bombarding the public with conceptual metaphor THE MURDER



AS THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY. In the example “Mr. Sinwar’s killing was a powerful blow to a violent organization”, the word **blow** means a severe setback, loss, or emotional/psychological damage (OALD). This aligns with the conceptual metaphor THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY, where the murder of Yahya Sinwar is metaphorically framed as a mental impact, a “blow” or a change, that weakens or harms Hamas as an organization. The claim that the assassination of Yahya Sinwar will negatively impact Palestinians aligns with McKinlay’s findings which states that any actions against or events involving Hamas political leaders have detrimental consequences for the Palestinian people (6).

Although THE MURDER is described as a single point in the overall conflict, *The New York Times* still described THE MURDER itself as a war. In the example of the conceptual metaphor THE MURDER AS WAR, particularly in the sentence “We must continue with all our strength until total victory”, the phrase **total victory** means complete success or absolute triumph over the opponent (OALD). This aligns with the conceptual metaphor THE MURDER AS WAR, where THE MURDER is framed as a battle within a war. The phrase suggests that Sinwar’s death is part of an ongoing struggle that aims for a definitive and ultimate success, referring to Israel’s broader objectives in the war against Hamas. This statement is supported by Kirchofer’s thesis (7), which argues that the assassination of Hamas leaders is one of Israel’s tactical successes and strategic challenges in its effort to win the war.

Because the murder of Yahya Sinwar was conducted by Israel as a STRATEGY to win the conflict with Palestine, the murder that has been successfully carried out is considered a VICTORY. In the sentence “Assassinating Yahya Sinwar was Israel’s Osama bin Laden Moment”, the word **moment** literally means ‘a very short period of time’ (OALD). However, it metaphorically means that THE MURDER is equated to the U.S. killing of Osama bin Laden, implying that this act is a major success or milestone in Israel’s fight against Hamas, considering that both Osama bin Laden and Yahya Sinwar are prominent figures associated with the Hamas and Palestinian movement in their resistance against Israel. The murder of Sinwar is not merely seen as the removal of a leader, but also as an achievement or a conquest, similar to winning a battle in war. On the other hand, the murder was cast as a STRATEGY. This can be seen from “Israel’s killing of the Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar is the newest manifestation of that century-old premise.” The word **premise** literally means a statement or an idea that forms the basis for a reasonable argument (OALD). It metaphorically shows that assassinating Yahya Sinwar was guided by a fundamental and reasonable doctrine or principle that has existed for a long time, in this case; a “century-old”. In the context of conceptual metaphor THE MURDER AS STRATEGY, it depicts Sinwar’s assassination as a part of an ongoing military or political strategy that aligns with past actions.

In addition to emphasizing THE MURDER, *The New York Times* also directs the public to the broader scope of the conflict, by bringing the conceptual metaphors of THE CONFLICT AS WAR by sentence “Israel has pursued the most devastating war in its history.” The verb **has pursued** literally means to do something or try to achieve something over a period of time (OALD). In the sentence, it metaphorically frames Israel’s involvement in the war as an active pursuit, similar to how someone chases a goal or an enemy. It



reinforces that Israel is not just passively involved in the war but is strategically and forcefully carrying it forward.

Finally, *The New York Times* casts a negative spotlight on Yahya Sinwar by using the conceptual metaphor of YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT, where Yahya Sinwar is seen as the cause of the overall conflict between Israel and Hamas during his tenure as chairman of Hamas. The example that illustrates this is “the Hamas leader who was an architect of the Oct. 7 attacks”. The word *architect* literally means ‘a person whose job is designing a building’ (OALD). It metaphorically means that Yahya Sinwar is a planner, creator, or mastermind behind the attacks. Since the October 7, 2023 attack has killed many Israelis, this metaphor aligns with the YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT, where Sinwar is portrayed as the driving force behind the escalating conflict, much like how an architect designs and directs the creation of a structure. This statement is consistent with Mehr’s research (9), which asserts that it was the Hamas leaders who transformed Hamas from a terrorist organization into a political power, thereby exerting a broader impact in prolonging the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In a similar fashion, Table 2 shows the utilization of conceptual metaphors in *Al Jazeera*’s five selected articles. It lists 15 source domains that pair with 3 target domains, i.e., the murder of Yahya Sinwar or THE MURDER, the conflict of Israel-Hamas or THE CONFLICT, and YAHYA SINWAR. The table includes the frequency of the conceptual metaphor occurrence in news reports. A sample text selected from *Al Jazeera* articles is provided to exemplify how the 15 source domains are identified and paired with the 3 target domains.

Table 2:
The Conceptual Metaphors and Their Frequency of Occurrence in Al Jazeera

Source Domain	Target Domain	<i>n</i>
WAR	THE MURDER	10
THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE	THE MURDER	7
JOURNEY	THE MURDER	6
GAME	THE MURDER	4
SYMBOLISM	THE MURDER	3
THE CAUSE OF HEAT	THE MURDER	2
PREDATORY BEHAVIOUR	THE MURDER	2
COLONIALISM	THE MURDER	1
WAR	THE CONFLICT	2
THE CAUSE OF HEAT	THE CONFLICT	1
COLONIALISM	THE CONFLICT	1
HERO	YAHYA SINWAR	9
LEADER	YAHYA SINWAR	6
STRATEGIC PLANNER	YAHYA SINWAR	4



THE CAUSE OF HEAT	YAHYA SINWAR	2
TOTAL		60

1. THE MURDER AS WAR
“We will **pursue** our enemies to the end”. (Article 5)
2. THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE
“It is consciously **engendering** ever greater resistance.” (Article 2)
3. THE MURDER AS JOURNEY
“Over the past few days, the Israeli army has only intensified **its drive** to ethnically cleanse northern Gaza, killing about 640 people in 17 days.” (Article 1)
4. THE MURDER AS GAME
“PM Netanyahu says **the score is settled.**” (Article 4)
5. THE MURDER AS SYMBOLISM
“Today **evil** has been dealt a blow.” (Article 2)
6. THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT
“The war on Gaza **has sparked** a regional conflict.” (Article 4)
7. THE MURDER AS PREDATORY BEHAVIOUR
“At least as long as there are still Palestinians and fellow Arabs committed to resisting Israel’s **bloodthirsty** efforts.” (Article 2)
8. THE MURDER AS COLONIALISM
“Who suffer the consequences of Zionist **settler-colonialism.**” (Article 1)
9. THE CONFLICT AS WAR
“Israel has been **conducting** a war on Gaza since October last year.” (Article 4)
10. THE CONFLICT AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT
“The martyrdom of the commander Sinwar and those who came before him in the axis of resistance will strengthen the resolve and determination of the resistance in all the battlefields and arenas to proceed on the road of liberating Palestine and eradicating **the cancerous Zionist tumour.**” (Article 5)
11. THE CONFLICT AS COLONIALISM
“Israel was aggressively **expanding** its settler-colonial dominance over Palestinian land in occupied East Jerusalem.” (Article 1)
12. YAHYA SINWAR AS HERO
“He was blessed with a **warrior’s** death.” (Article 3)
13. YAHYA SINWAR AS LEADER
“In his role leading Hamas in Gaza, Sinwar focused on **building ties** in the region.” (Article 3)
14. YAHYA SINWAR AS STRATEGIC PLANNER
“Israeli officials say Sinwar was one of the **masterminds** behind the Hamas-led October 7 attack on Israel.” (Article 3)
15. YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT
“That **obstacle** no longer exists.” (Article 5)

From the five selected articles, there are 60 conceptual metaphor data used to describe the murder of Yahya Sinwar. Similar to *The New York Times*, the data collected represent 3 target domains. These three target domains were paired with several source domains, including WAR, THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE, JOURNEY, GAME, SYMBOLISM, THE CAUSE OF HEAT, PREDATORY BEHAVIOUR, COLONIALISM, HERO, LEADER, and STRATEGIC PLANNER. From all source



domains, the 6 source domains with the highest frequency are occupied by THE MURDER AS WAR (10 data), THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE (7 data), THE MURDER AS JOURNEY (6 data), THE MURDER AS GAME (4 data), THE MURDER AS SYMBOLISM (3 data), YAHYA SINWAR AS HERO (9 data), YAHYA SINWAR AS LEADER (6 data), and YAHYA SINWAR AS STRATEGIC PLANNER (4 data). The frequency of occurrence of the remaining 7 pairing patterns remains insignificant as they only appear in one or two data. In describing the murder of Yahya Sinwar, *Al Jazeera* utilized several basic principles that became its special characteristic. At the top of the data obtained, the most used metaphor is THE MURDER AS WAR. In the example “We will pursue our enemies”, the word **pursue** literally ‘means to do something or try to achieve something over period of time’ (OALD). In this context, the murder of Yahya Sinwar is framed as a military action, where the army might chase down the enemies during a conflict and it is part of an ongoing military or legal battle, emphasizing the war-like nature of the pursuit against him.

At the second place, *Al Jazeera* utilized the metaphor THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE in its articles. It put emphasis on the murder can impact Palestinian in a positive way. The example is “It is consciously engendering ever greater resistance”. The word **engendering** literally means ‘to make feelings or situation exist’ (OALD). It metaphorically frames resistance as something that can be born and grown, implying that the murder of Yahya Sinwar is not eliminating opposition of Israel, but instead fueling and strengthening Hamas and Palestinian. It portrays Sinwar’s assassination as a catalyst for increased Palestinian resistance rather than suppressing it. This statement is supported by Kirchofer’s thesis, which state ‘the assassination of Hamas leaders doesn’t even scare the smallest Palestinian child’.

Meanwhile, the third most frequently utilized conceptual metaphor is THE MURDER AS JOURNEY. By this metaphor, *Al Jazeera* shows the public that the murder is not the only iconic thing in the whole Israel-Hamas war. The example sentence is “over the past few days, the Israeli army has only intensified its drive to ethnically cleanse northern Gaza.” The phrase **its drive** literally means a strong and determined effort to accomplish a goal (OALD). It frames the assassination and related events as part of a larger continuous process or movement toward an end goal, which is winning the war.

Moreover, *Al Jazeera* portrays the assassination of Yahya Sinwar as a strategic act framed within the conceptual metaphor THE MURDER AS A GAME. This is evident in the quotation “Today, we have settled the score,” which metaphorically positions the murder as a form of retribution or competitive maneuvering, aligning with the notion of calculated moves within a game structure. This statement was made by an Israeli official, which demonstrates that *Al Jazeera* also included opinions from the opposing side before subsequently reinforcing the narrative with views from pro-Palestinian figures.

In addition, *Al Jazeera* also incorporates statements from Israeli officials that further reinforce metaphorical representations. For instance, the phrase “Today, evil has been dealt a blow”—attributed to Benjamin Netanyahu—employs symbolic language that casts the murder of Yahya Sinwar as a manifestation of getting rid of an evil. The metaphor THE MURDER AS SYMBOLISM attempts not only to justify the assassination but also conveys a moral triumph. By presenting such quotations, *Al Jazeera* provides a discursive space to expose and potentially critique the symbolic



constructions imposed by Israeli narratives. In response, *Al Jazeera* provided a contrasting portrayal by stating that the assassination of Yahya Sinwar actually ignited the flames of resistance among the Palestinian people, right after the symbolism.

Al Jazeera cast a positive spotlight on Yahya Sinwar. It can be seen through the utilization of target domain YAHYA SINWAR. In the example “He was blessed with a warrior’s death,” Yahya Sinwar was metaphorically depicted as a noble and honorable passing to a soldier dying heroically in battle. This aligns with the conceptual metaphor YAHYA SINWAR AS HERO, portraying him as a brave warrior who fought and died with dignity, which occupies the most frequently utilized conceptual metaphor in *Al Jazeera*. This statement aligns with Singh’s assertion in his book *Suicide Bombers: Victims, Heroes or Martyrs?* that anyone killed by Israel while defending Palestine is regarded as a hero.

The second most frequent conceptual metaphor appeared in this media outlet is YAHYA SINWAR AS LEADER. In the sentence “In his role leading Hamas in Gaza, Sinwar focused on building ties in the region,” the phrase **building ties** metaphorically refers to establishing and strengthening relationships, framing diplomacy and alliances as something constructed over time, like a solid structure. It reinforces his active role in shaping and strengthening relationships, much like a leader that constructs and reinforces a strong foundation for an organization or movement.

Finally, *Al Jazeera* highlighted the important role of Yahya Sinwar in the Hamas organization. This image was effectively conveyed by bombarding the public with conceptual metaphor YAHYA SINWAR AS STRATEGIC PLANNER. The sentence “Israeli officials say Sinwar was one of the masterminds behind the Hamas-led October 7 attack on Israel” was expressed by Sinwar’s companion in Hamas, Mohammad Deif. This word bears a negative meaning, referring to someone who is highly intelligent and skilled at planning complex operations, but often one that involves a crime (OALD). Sinwar was negatively labelled by the Israel officials since he was indeed one of the most wanted Hamas leaders during the conflict. However, the word **mastermind** is taken positively by Hamas fighters since it frames Sinwar as the chief planner or architect of the attack.

The Role of Conceptual Metaphors in Shaping Media Bias Discourse in the Murder of Yahya Sinwar Reports

It is important to highlight that the two media outlets presented the news about the murder of Yahya Sinwar in different fashions. *The New York Times* generally focused on reporting Israeli military operation on October 16, 2024, which led to the death of the powerful Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. The detailed information about how Sinwar was located by the Israeli military and how he was assassinated was reported promptly by *The New York Times*. Meanwhile, *Al Jazeera* focused more on reporting the world’s reaction toward Sinwar’s assassination and its impacts on Hamas continuous struggle for freedom. *Al Jazeera* also provided counterarguments against the opinions of the Israeli military officials and leaders regarding Hamas and Yahya Sinwar in *The New York Times* articles. For example, *Al Jazeera* quoted *The New York Times*’ statement “Today, evil has been dealt a blow,” in its article. This statement was expressed to frame the murder of Yahya Sinwar as a step of getting rid of an evil. Rejecting and contradicting



the framing, *Al Jazeera* countered by praising Sinwar's leading role in the Palestinian struggle.

Although *The New York Times* articles maintain a consistent and longer word count (with an average of 1,157 words across the five selected articles), *Al Jazeera* articles contain a higher number of conceptual metaphors, despite having a slightly lower average word count (1,103 words across five articles). Based on the data, *Al Jazeera* employs 60 conceptual metaphors, whereas *The New York Times* uses 41. This indicates that *The New York Times* adopts a more selective and strategically framed narrative, while *Al Jazeera* presents a broader range of perspectives.

Both *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* utilized conceptual metaphors to frame the murder of Yahya Sinwar. However, their metaphorical choices reflect different ideological perspectives and narrative emphases. The two news outlets use the same three target domains, which are THE MURDER (of Yahya Sinwar), THE CONFLICT (between Hamas and Israel as a whole), and YAHYA SINWAR. However, they utilized significantly different source domains. Considering that source domain is a concrete or familiar domain drawn from metaphorical expressions that provides the structure for understanding target domains, different source domain choices between *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* show that both media outlets have different stances, ideology, and biases.

Since *The New York Times* predominantly employs the source domains JOURNEY, THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY, WAR, and VICTORY, it attempts to frame Sinwar's assassination as a strategic victory for Israel while simultaneously depicting the downfall of Hamas and the Palestinian resistance. In contrast, *Al Jazeera* frames the assassination as a catalyst for Palestinian resistance by incorporating the source domain YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE. Through this framing, *Al Jazeera* aims to counter the narrative that Hamas and Palestinians are experiencing defeat by highlighting the contradictory effects of Sinwar's murder.

Additionally, the choice of target domains plays a significant role in discourse bias framing. In *The New York Times* articles, the dominant target domain is THE MURDER, indicating the outlet's focus on the assassination carried out by the Israeli military. However, *The New York Times* also reinforces a negative portrayal of Sinwar through the metaphor YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT, encouraging readers to label him as a central figure responsible for escalating conflict within the Israel-Hamas war. On the other hand, *Al Jazeera* provides a more positive spotlight on Yahya Sinwar. In its articles, conceptual metaphors such as YAHYA SINWAR AS HERO, YAHYA SINWAR AS LEADER, and YAHYA SINWAR AS STRATEGIC PLANNER, are frequently used to counter the negative portrayals advanced by Israeli sources. Through this framing, *Al Jazeera* presents Sinwar as a leader and hero, whose determination to resist Israeli Zionism serves as an inspiration for the Palestinian people.

The metaphor choices in both media outlets reflect their respective political ideologies and perspectives on the Israel-Hamas conflict. The ideological positioning reinforced by these conceptual metaphors is consistent with each media outlet's established stance, which existed long before the assassination of Yahya Sinwar.



Additionally, metaphor selection not only reflects ideology but also demonstrates reporting bias.

An analysis of source domains and target domains in both media outlets reveals distinct ideological leanings and biases. *The New York Times* presents a pro-Israel stance, framing the murder of Yahya Sinwar as a calculated success for Israel while reinforcing Hamas's military-strategic and psychological defeat. This framing is further strengthened by negative portrayals of Sinwar, depicting him as an obstacle whose elimination weakens Hamas and advances Israel's military and political goals. By using such conceptual metaphors, *The New York Times* aligns its reporting with a broader pro-Israel stance, shaping public perception accordingly.

In contrast, *Al Jazeera* presents a pro-Palestinian perspective, defending Yahya Sinwar through positive portrayals, depicting him as a leader and martyr for Hamas and Palestine, while reinforcing the Palestinian resistance narrative. *Al Jazeera* further frames the murder not as an Israeli victory, but as a rallying point for continued Palestinian defiance, emphasizing Sinwar's legacy as a leader and symbol of resistance rather than his defeat.

This contrast demonstrates how conceptual metaphors influence public opinion by shaping how readers perceive the reality of the conflict. If readers follow *The New York Times'* discourse, they may view Sinwar's assassination as a necessary military decision. For example, *The New York Times* employs the metaphor "Osama bin Laden Moment," likening Sinwar's assassination to the elimination of a major terrorist figure, reinforcing the justification that the murder was a necessary act for national security. Conversely, if readers follow *Al Jazeera's* discourse, they may perceive Sinwar's assassination as an oppressive act that fuels further resistance. This is evident in metaphors such as "warrior's death," which associates Yahya Sinwar's assassination with the heroic death of a fighter, imbuing it with honor and valor rather than portraying it as a military loss.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from this study that the utilization of conceptual metaphors in *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* articles on the murder of Yahya Sinwar shows two key similarities and significant differences. The first similarity is that both media outlets employ the same three target domains, namely THE MURDER, THE CONFLICT, and YAHYA SINWAR. This indicates that both *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* frame the murder of Yahya Sinwar by emphasizing these three essential aspects and pairing them with various source domains. The use of these target domains suggests that both outlets consider these aspects as abstract concepts that require concrete associations to enhance cognitive understanding.

Secondly, two specific pairing of source domain and target domain are used identically in both media outlets with high frequency. These pairings, THE MURDER AS JOURNEY and THE MURDER AS WAR, reflect how both outlets perceive Sinwar's assassination merely as a point within a long-standing conflict rather than a unique or defining event. These metaphors reinforce the idea that the murder is not an isolated incident, but



rather part of the broader trajectory of the Israel-Hamas conflict, considering that numerous events continue to unfold within the broader Hamas-Israel conflict.

The study also reveals significant differences in the way conceptual metaphors are employed. These differences illustrate how the utilization of conceptual metaphors shapes discourse in a way that reflects media bias toward conflicting parties. The conceptual metaphors in *The New York Times* create a discourse that frames Sinwar's assassination as a catalyst for Hamas's downfall, portraying it as THE CAUSE OF MENTAL INJURY and a victory for Israel through THE MURDER AS VICTORY. It also reinforces negative portrayals of Yahya Sinwar, employing YAHYA SINWAR AS THE CAUSE OF HEAT to emphasize his role as an instigator of violence.

Conversely, *Al Jazeera* constructs an opposing discourse, framing Sinwar's assassination as a rallying point for Palestinian resistance through THE MURDER AS THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE. It positively portrays Yahya Sinwar, utilizing YAHYA SINWAR AS HERO and YAHYA SINWAR AS LEADER to emphasize his leadership and legacy within the Palestinian struggle. It serves as defense mechanisms against the negative spotlight imposed by Israeli sources. Through this framing, *Al Jazeera* aims to depict Yahya Sinwar as a leader and hero whose spirit in fighting against Israeli Zionism can be followed by the Palestinian people. These contrasting metaphorical choices highlight how conceptual metaphors reinforce discourse that aligns with the media outlet's ideological and biased stance.

Future research could examine the extent to which conceptual metaphors are used as persuasive tools across a broader selection of articles over an extended period. It could also explore the degree to which media outlets intentionally employ conceptual metaphors on the subject being investigated. This would produce a more in-depth analysis and provide valuable insights into the strategic use of metaphor in media discourse.

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