

Extended Abstract

Metaphorical Conceptualization of Hijab in the Domestic Media Discourse: A Cognitive-discursive Approach

Zeinab Nouri

Adjunct Professor, Department of English language, Ilam Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ilam, Iran
Zeynabnouri2018@gmail.com

Akram Shekarian Behzadi¹

Adjunct Professor, Department of English language, Kerman Branch, Farhangian University, Kerman, Iran
shekarian.akram@gmail.com

Introduction

The discussion of hijab is one of the important topics in Iranian society that has always been of interest to researchers, and various studies have been conducted on its various dimensions. In recent years, in official and unofficial forums as well as various media outlets, the issue of hijab and modesty has been one of the hottest topics, turning into a place for debate and contention. Officials and stakeholders have expressed their views from various cultural, social, and political perspectives on this matter. The statements and positions of governmental and non-governmental authorities, as well as the domestic Persian-language media, regarding hijab have led to the formation of a discourse in this area that is open to various angles of examination. One aspect worth exploring in this discourse is the widespread use of metaphors in shaping, promoting, and strengthening hijab. Given the importance of the hijab discourse in the public and media space of the country in recent years, and considering the central role of metaphors in the production and promotion of this discourse, the aim of this research is to examine the metaphors used for conceptualizing hijab in the domestic media discourse and identify which metaphors play a role in creating and promoting this prevalent discourse on the subject of hijab.

Materials & Methods

In this descriptive-analytical research, the data consists of metaphorical expressions related to the topic of hijab extracted from domestic media texts, including Fars News Agency, Mashregh News, Mehr News, Tasnim, Young Journalists Club, and the online news portal Khabaronline. The data extraction was carried out using a keyword search method (including hijab, efaf [chastity], bi-hijabi [unveiledness], bad-hijabi [improper

¹ Corresponding Author

veiling], and berehnegi [nudity]) over a one-year period from July 2022 to June 2023. In total, among all the events of the mentioned keywords, 143 metaphorical expressions were extracted, with 112 used for conceptualizing hijab and 31 for conceptualizing bi-hijabi/bad-hijabi. The MIPVU method (Steen et al., 2010), a systematic approach for identifying metaphors at the lexical level was employed for extracting metaphorical expressions. These data were then analyzed within the framework of cognitive linguistics and based on two theories: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004).

The way hijab is conceptualized in different texts has rarely been investigated, with only a few studies addressing this issue. One notable study is the article by Rezapour and Yaghmaei (2017), which examined conceptual metaphors related to hijab in several published books in this field. The results of the research indicate that the domain of *plants* is the most frequent source domain for conceptualizing hijab in the Persian cultural discourse. Additionally, conceptual domains of *protection*, *security*, *value*, *harim* (*boundary*), *obstacle*, and *fortress* have also been identified.

Results & Discussion

The research data analysis shows that in the discourse of domestic media, various conceptual domains are used metaphorically to express the concept of hijab, with the *war* domain being one of the most common. In addition to war, the domains of *protection*, *building*, and *market* also have a wide application in these conceptualizations. The table below presents the frequency and percentage of source domains in the metaphorical representation of hijab.

Table 1.

Source domains for the conceptualization of hijab

Source Domain	Frequency	percentage
War	55	49 %
Protection	38	34 %
Flag	9	8 %
Market	6	5 %
Building	4	4 %
Total	112	

In contrast to hijab, the concepts of bi-hijabi and bad-hijabi have also been expressed through metaphors. The source domains employed for conceptualizing these concepts are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Source domains for the conceptualization of bi-hijabi/bad-hijabi

Source Domain	Frequency	percentage
Disease	11	35 %
War	10	32 %
Plants	5	16 %
Fire	3	10 %
Market	2	7 %
Total	31	

The use of metaphors based on the conceptual domain of war, which play a crucial role in conceptualizing the discourse of hijab, suggests that the country's officials or press perceive the category of hijab as an arena for battle between the government and its enemies. Conceptualizing the category of hijab as a battlefield, flag, showcase, etc., as well as conceptualizing bi-hijabi/bad-hijabi as a virus, pest, fire, etc., has argumentative and emotional effects on the audience, because as research in the field of metaphors shows, metaphors, in addition to facilitating the understanding of concepts (cognitive function), also affect the reasoning and emotions of the audience (argumentative and emotional functions) and thus play an important role in discursive conflicts.

The argumentative function of metaphors allows discourse producers to use a particular conceptual metaphor to present an argument in support of their particular attitude or belief, and thus persuade the audience to accept that attitude or belief. In addition to their argumentative function, metaphors of hijab, and especially metaphors based on the domain of war, also play an important emotional function. War is a well-known phenomenon for most humans, and because it has a profound impact on various aspects of human life and even on his or her survival or death, it has a strong emotional charge. By conceptualizing the category of hijab as an arena of battle, discourse producers of COVID-19 have tried to emotionally engage the audience and highlight the importance of the issue of hijab in their minds.

Conclusion

The study results indicate that the conceptual domain of *war* is the most important domain for conceptualizing the hijab, encompassing multiple conceptual metaphors such as 'hijab is a front-line', 'hijab is a weapon', 'hijab is a barrier', 'hijab is a fortress' and 'hijab is a flag', which can be categorized under the key concept of 'hijab is a battlefield'. The conceptual domain of *protection* also plays a significant role in metaphorical conceptualization of the hijab, with metaphors like 'hijab is a dam', 'hijab is a castle' and 'hijab is a sanctuary'. These metaphors fall under the key concept of 'hijab is a protector'. Additionally, other domains such as *building* and *market* have also been utilized in conceptualizing the hijab. On the other hand, the concept of bi-hijabi is also expressed through metaphors from the domains of *war*, *disease*, *plants*, *fire*, and *market*. The argumentative and emotional functions of these metaphors enable producers of the hijab discourse to effectively convey and promote their ideological perspectives and beliefs.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor; Metaphor, Hijab Discourse; Metaphorical Conceptualization; Persuasion

References

- Aeinevand, B. (2012). *A critical-cognitive study of metaphor in the Iranian political discourse*. M.A Thesis in Linguistics. Isfahan: University of Isfahan [In Persian].
- Ansarian, S. (2022). *A critical discourse analysis of cartoons related to Iran's foreign policy within the framework of conceptual metaphor and blending theories*. Ph.D. Thesis in Linguistics. Tehran: Shahid Beheshti University [In Persian].
- Bashir, H. (2012). Cultural policy of difference in the representation of women in western media. *Journal of Iranian Cultural Research*, 4(3), 45-69. doi: 10.7508/ijcr.2011.15.003 [In Persian]
- Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus approach to critical metaphor analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2011). *Politics and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor*. 2nd Ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chilton, P. & Lakoff, G. (1995). Foreign policy by metaphor. In C. Schaffner & A. Wenden (Eds.), *Language and Peace* (pp. 37-60). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Fazeli F. & Soltani, B. (2015). The persuasive model of metaphor in the socio-political discourse: Alteration, suggestion and consolidation of socio-political perspectives. *Literary Criticism*, 8 (31) :91-114. Doi: 20.1001.1.20080360.1394.8.31.1.6 [In Persian].
- Flusberg, S. J., Matlock, T. & Thibodeau, P. H. (2018). War metaphors in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 33 (1), 1-18.
- Ghafourisaleh, G., & Kazemi, F. (2021). Conceptual metaphors and their functions in the political discourse of the government of prudence and hope. *Language Science*, 8(13), 305-333. doi: 10.22054/lis.2021.56755.1403 [In Persian].
- Hart, C. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis and cognitive science: New perspectives on immigration discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Javdani Moghadam, M. (2019). Study of the evolution of hijab discourse in Iran's policy and culture. *Iranian Political Research*, 6 (20), 101-133. doi: <https://doi.org/10.22034/sej.2019.667450> [In Persian].
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2018). Metaphor in media language and cognition: A perspective from conceptual metaphor theory. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, III (1), p. 124-141.
- Lakoff, G. (1991). Metaphor and war; The metaphor system used to justify war in the gulf. *Peace Research*, 23(2-3), 25-32.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In: A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (2nd Ed.). (pp. 202-251). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & M. Johnson (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Moshiri Bardeskan, P. (2017). *Conceptual metaphor in political discourse of ministers of foreign affairs of Iran and the united states of America about Iran in 2015*. M. A. thesis in General Linguistics, Semnan: Semnan University [In Persian].
- Musolff, A. (2004). *Metaphor and political discourse: analogical reasoning in debates about Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Musolff, A. (2012). The study of metaphor as part of critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 9(3), 301-310.
- Musolff, A. (2016). *Political metaphor analysis: Discourse and scenarios*. London: Bloomsbury.

- Noormohammadi, M., & Dabir-Moghadam, M. (2019). Critical analysis of metaphors in the television presidential election in Iran (2016). *Journal of Audio-Visual Media*, 13(30), 227-252. doi: 10.22085/javm.2019.165433.1222 [In Persian].
- Rezapour, E., & Yaghmaei, M. (2017). The role of culture in construction and selection of conceptual metaphor of hijab in Persian cultural discourse based on discourse theory of metaphor. *Journal of Western Iranian Languages and Dialects*, 3(15), 73-89. doi: 10.22126/jlw.2017.1195 [In Persian].
- Ritchie, D. (2022). Decoding information: The abuse of personification and machine metaphors. In S. Wuppuluri & A. C. Grayling (eds.), *Metaphors and analogies in sciences and humanities: Words and worlds*. pp. 239-252. Cham: Springer.
- Semino, E. (2008). *Metaphor in discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Steen, G. J., Dorst, A. G., Herrmann, J. B., Kaal A. A. & Krennmayr, T. (2010). *A method for linguistic metaphor identification: From MIP to MIPVU*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Thibodeau, P. H., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning. *PLoS ONE*, 6 (2): 1-11.
- Torabi, E. (2014). Metaphor in political discourse: A study based on Dr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad's speeches. M.A. Thesis in General Linguistics. Zahedan: University of Sistan and Baluchestan [In Persian].
- Ungerer, F. & Schmid, H. J. (2006). *An introduction to cognitive linguistics* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Zhang, X. (2021). Development and critiques of conceptual metaphor theory. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(11): 1487-1491.