**Metaphorical language in the speeches of Yasser Arafat, former president of the Palestinian National Authority**

**Abstract**

This paper shows how Yasser Arafat, the former president of the Palestinian National Authority (1994-2004), relied on metaphor as an essential rhetorical device to promote his ideological position of strong opposition to the discriminatory and brutal policies of the Israeli government toward the Palestinian people, and the policy of building settlements in the Palestinian territories. The specific examples of Arafat’s use of metaphor discussed below refer to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, the systematic violation of human rights, the ignoring of Palestinians’ basic needs, and the refusal to recognize a Palestinian state. The paper is based on the assumption that Arafat’s use of metaphor in his political discourse has unique rhetorical characteristics that help sharpen his messages, with the aim of emphasizing Palestinian suffering and positively influencing Israel’s discriminatory patterns of activity toward them, i.e., to make Israel recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, grant them historical justice, and implement a two-state solution.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Keywords; political metaphors, political discourse, Yasser Arafat, Palestine, Israel

1. **Introduction**

This paper discusses the use of metaphor in the political discourse of Yasser Arafat, the former president of the Palestinian National Authority (1994‒2004). The aim is to shed light on the use of metaphor as a rhetorical device in Arafat’s political discourse. The paper is based on the assumption that Arafat’s use of metaphor in his political discourse has unique rhetorical characteristics that can be identified, and that he chose specific metaphors to highlight Palestinian suffering as a result of Israel’s discriminatory policies toward them. Conveying this message by using metaphor as a rhetorical device may make Arafat’s messages more understandable to his audience, and thus help effect social and political change that is reflected in a positive shift in Israel’s attitude toward the Palestinians.

This paper argues that Arafat’s choice of metaphors is not random, but rather is designed to serve his political positions and in particular to express sharp criticism of Israel for its racist conduct against the Palestinians. Such a choice reflects how Arafat’s audience understands and perceives the world, and persuades them to take a stand. Arafat’s use of the phrase “the whirlpool of violence and terrorism,” for example, employs a manipulative metaphor whose function is to deter Israel’s excessive violence against the Palestinians, which leads to violence on the part of the Palestinians, causing a reciprocal “whirlpool” of violence and terror that will never cease while Israel adheres to its policy of subjugating the Palestinians.

 We adopted a cognitive approach in our analysis of these metaphors. This is not based on coincidental similarities between two objects from different fields, but rather on the conceptualization of one field through the other. The above “whirlpool” metaphor, for example, uses nature imagery to conceptualize Israel’s policy of discrimination, deprivation, and excessive use of force against the Palestinians. Below, we examine a set of examples from Arafat’s speeches taken from the following Palestinian newspapers in 1995‒98: *Al-Quds*, *Al-Sha’ab*, *Al-Ayam*, and *Al-Haya Al Jadida*.

The study uses a collection and sorting methodology, according to which examples of metaphors from different fields were collected and then sorted into categories: nature, war, the human, historical events relating to the Jewish people, etc. Next, an attempt was made to create a complete set of metaphors, based on their rhetorical characteristics, and to demonstrate how Arafat intentionally chose them in order to positively influence Israeli government policy.

**2.1 Rhetoric**

Language is the primary means through which humans understand the world. Speech is the expression of wisdom (*sophia*), allowing people to reason about a situation, construct a dialogue, understand, and investigate a subject. Humans have developed a strong ability and power for verbal and written expression, without which they could not realize any intellectual achievement beyond that of animals (Gitay 2010: 27; Searle 2002: 18). Communication is a fundamental action that unites and encourages a diverse, variegated society (Graber 1993: 305; Mio 1997: 113). Rhetoricians, knowing the importance and power of words adopt strategies that can be realized through use of words, their primary tools. They use words in a sophisticated manner, to create a new reality that their listeners will accept. This is done by first building a bridge of consent with listeners, after which the work of persuasion is undertaken on the basis of this created consent (Gitay 2013: 120).

Rhetoric has been called “verbal manipulation” (Wolman 1995) because, when used correctly and effectively, written or oral expressions can be intentionally used not only to convey information, but to influence, persuade, and motivate others to take a certain action. Oral and written rhetorical devices are widely used by many people and in many areas of life. People are social creatures, and their very existence and ability to act depend on their ability to communicate in an understandable way. While spoken and written words are used primarily for the exchange of information, virtually all people, rulers and ordinary citizens alike, have an instinctive urge to persuade others to accept their opinions, inclinations, and preferred lifestyle. The skill of persuasion is the ability to change others’ opinions or attitudes through some means of communication. Since the times of ancient Greece, rhetoric has been a significant area of public communication, and this no less true today (Kayam and Sover 2013: 43).

Aristotle (2002) defined rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion.” (Kayam and Sover 2013: 44). Rhetoric became a respected and integral part of the development of democratic patterns of governing in ancient Greece. Verbal persuasion was seen as essential for the advancement of public affairs, and a skill every citizen needed to establish a place in the social system (Aristotle 2002). Teaching the art of speech and the discipline of rhetoric began in the fifth century BC, led by Corax of Syracuse, who lived in Sicily. In 644 BC, the tyrannical regime of Syracuse was overthrown and replaced by a democratic regime. Many of the city’s residents had been exiled or had fled, and upon their return, they discovered that the tyrants had expropriated their lands and property. A wave of property lawsuits followed. Two citizens of Syracuse, Corax and Tisias, designed a method of rhetoric to advise people on how to argue their cases in court. In the heyday of the Athenian State, rhetoric was used in the courts and in the assembly, and echoes of this style are also found in tragedy, comedy, philosophy and historiography from that time (Aristotle, 2002; Kayam and Sover 2013: 44).

**2.1.1 Rhetoric in the Arabic Language**

Rhetoric, in its classic sense of using language to influence and persuade, is particularly valuable in the Arab language. In Arab culture, rhetoric is understood as the ability to enthrall one’s listeners through language that is used with subtlety, style, and rhythm (Patai 1973: 48). Arabic is a musical language, meant to be evocative, to affect listeners, and touch their hearts. The spoken word can evoke powerful emotions, shape behavior, and have an impact that reaches far beyond the scope of the content.

American-Arab historian Hitti noted that the Arab people are particularly ardent in their admiration for literary expression, both spoken and written, and that the Arabic language is unparalleled in its ability to exert a strong and irresistible influence on its audience (Hitti as quoted in Darshan 2000: 3). For example, it has been noted that modern audiences in Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo are deeply moved by the recitation of poems or speeches in classical Arabic, which they only vaguely or partially understand. The rhythm, rhyme, and melodic quality of the language exert an effect on listeners, which is referred to as “lawful magic.”

Another aspect of Arabic rhetoric (= *balāġa(h)*) is expressed in exaggeration (= *mubālaġa(h)*) and overemphasis as rhetorical devices (see Darshan 2000: 4 on Patai 1973). For example, on the eve of Israel’s War of Independence in 1948, leaders of Arab countries made boastful statements that deviated far from the truth in order to evoke a certain impression of the situation and to generate enthusiasm for their political desires and aspirations. For example, the Syrian president announced: “I am happy to tell you, with confidence, that we even have an atomic bomb at our disposal, yes, a homemade one…” The prime minister of Iraq declared: “All we need is a few brooms to sweep the Jews into the sea” (Patai 1973: 49–50). These statements had no basis in reality, and a deep chasm separated their words and deeds.

Using rhetoric as a means of persuasion, particularly as a means of gaining control over the masses, has undergone changes in modern times, because people today understand reality primarily through the media. The phenomenal growth of the media has inarguably affected the process of transmitting and receiving messages (Schaffner and Sellers 2010). Television and the internet have created virtually unlimited possibilities to manipulate audiences, especially through messages and means that are used primarily for purposes of mass marketing and sales (Galili 2004; Kayam and Sover 2013: 44).

People may obtain power and advance their political positions through the effective use of rhetorical devices. Politicians in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries behave differently than did political leaders in previous, more traditional, periods. This phenomenon has been termed “new politics” by German researchers (Kayam and Sover 2013: 45). New politics refers to the emergence of industrialized democracies and the decline of political parties in Western liberal democracies, both the result of the expansion of mass media and the personalization of politics (Galili 2004).

In the past four decades, many scholars have discussed the sweeping social changes that led to the emergence of new politics in industrialized democracies in the West. These changes are reflected in the transition from materialist values to post-materialist values, and have led to the formulation of a new paradigm. Some researchers have argued that this new paradigm represents a transition from “old politics” that were concerned with economic growth, maintaining public order, national security, and a traditional lifestyle, to a “new politics” that are focused on individual freedom, social equality, and quality of life. As a society achieves a certain level of economic prosperity, public attention shifts away from economic problems and towards issues related to quality of life. Therefore, people prefer leaders with a flexible governing style and strong communication skills, who tend to resemble effective managers able to empower their followers (Galili 2004; Kayam and Sover 2013: 45).

### **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach**

CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that is used in discourse analysis. It focuses on how social and political power is created and maintained through language, seeking to expose discursive biases and manipulations that serve political interests and advance controversial ideological positions, and highlighting the methods or stratagems through which the discourse produces or maintains an unequal balance of power in a society. CDA aims to expose the linguistic, cultural, and historical roots that support the practices—the modes of action—that preserve the balance of power. The approach’s basic premise is that discourse has the capacity to shape social identities and establish relations between groups of people and individuals. CDA thus focuses on the way in which social structures embody the existing balance of power and control in the society through discourse: how the discourse produces them, approves them, challenges them, or legitimizes them. It seeks to understand, expose, and ultimately oppose social inequality (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 361; Hart 2010: 13–4; Wodak 2001a: 10; van Dijk 2001: 352; Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 32; Meyer 2001: 15).

The term “power” is the main concept in Critical Discourse Analysis, the discourse mechanism being seen as a central way to actualize power in social contexts. This premise is fostered by the thinking of social philosophers such as Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Antonion Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu, and others who drew attention to the central role of language in constructing social reality. (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 361; Hart 2010: 13-14; Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 32; Meyer 2001: 15).

For Foucault, discourse is a representation of knowledge about a certain subject; it is linked to knowledge production through language. Foucault argues that the term “discourse” relates not only to language but to action modes (practices), rules, and regulations. Discourse constructs and defines the objects of our knowledge. It controls how to talk about a subject or to act regarding it; it determines the accepted ways to talk about it, and thus also limits other possibilities for knowledge construction about the same subject. A discourse will never consist of one statement, one text, one act, or one source; it will appear in a variety of texts and different institutional contexts in the society (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 362).

According to Foucault, “Words/Things” have meaning and can be called real only in a specific historical context. For example, “mental illness” is not an “objective” object that means the same thing in every era and every culture. Thus, the term “mental illness” does not signify something objective in the world. The object it represents is an outcome of the construction of knowledge that occurs within a certain discourse. This object is constructed by all that is said about it in a certain culture and in a certain period, by the way it is described, explained, judged, classified, etc. (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 362; Meyer 2001: 15). In essence, discourse constructs objects, instilling them with significance and meaning in a particular social and cultural context. Discourse determines how people see things and creates a picture of their world and their outlooks, thus influencing their actions as well. According to van Dijk (1984: 13), prejudice is not merely a characteristic of individual beliefs or emotions about social groups. Such ethnic attitudes have social functions, e.g., to protect the interests of the in group. The cognitive structures of prejudice and the strategies of its use reflect these social functions (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 21–-22).

CDA scholars regard themselves as ideologically motivated and committed, and their research is a kind of intervention in the life of society and social relations. Many researchers from this school are also active in movements against racism, feminist movements, peace movements, and so forth. They state their ideological intentions openly and stand with weaker social groups against more powerful ones. The quality of their research is not measured by:” objectivity” and academic remoteness, but by preserving the norms of systematic, rigorous, cautious analysis that are accepted in all scientific research (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 371; Meyer 2001: 15)

CDA is not a school of linguistics or discourse research. While the stated goal of traditional scholars of discourse is to reveal and describe the linguistic system’s structure and laws, CDA scholars tend to argue that the academic description traditional scholars offer is sterile and has no social and ideological implications (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 371).

While analyzing texts and “linguistic events” requires some analytical method, CDA on principle is neither based on nor prefers a single theory or a uniform analytical method. Instead, CDA offers a kind of tool box for the researcher, a list of linguistic and textual characteristics that can be examined when one wishes to analyze a text critically (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 366; Wodak 2001b: 64).[[2]](#footnote-2)

**2.2 Conceptual metaphor theory**

Metaphor, as posited by cognitive linguistics, is the essential core of human thought and creativity. Since the language of politics is characterized by metaphorical themes, metaphors are a powerful tool for getting to the heart of political thought. Metaphorical expressions nourish our worldview and shape our thinking and, in turn, our actual behavior (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3–6; Mio 1997: 117–26; Koller 2012: 25). Examination of the context of metaphorical expressions facilitates our understanding of such metaphors and the goals that they are meant to attain in a given communicative event (Ifeanyichukwu, Kadiri, & Ijem 2018: 95–6). Metaphorical linguistic usages reflect how we perceive reality (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3–6; Mio 1997: 117–26; Koller 2012: 25). Lakoff took this idea a step further, showing that metaphors not only reflect our view of reality but also influence it. In January 1991, on the heels of the First Gulf War, he analyzed the U.S. Administration’s political discourse and showed how the Bush Administration used metaphors to justify going to war. In so doing, he demonstrated how metaphor analysis can be critical in exposing discourse manipulations and normally hidden ideologies (Livnat 2014, vol.2: 368–9).

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri (2009: 2011), studying metaphors in the Israeli political discourse, shows how they help to portray war as a normal part of life. Such war-normalizing metaphors aim to naturalize and legitimate the use of military power by creating a systematic analogy between war and objects that are far from the battlefield.[[3]](#footnote-3) For example, the metaphoric phrase “Golda’s kitchen” was the popular nickname for the most intimate circle of Prime Minister Golda Meir’s advisers. This metaphor conceals a secretive and undemocratic decision-making process even in security matters and other central issues. In essence, the “kitchen” metaphor hides what was often, in fact, a “war room” where Israel’s most urgent security matters were decided. According to the critical discourse analysis approach, the use of such metaphors is manipulative and helps to depict war as a normal, mundane, and unsurprising state of being, as expected and reasonable as medicine or business. In this way, the metaphor masks the true, terrible, and violent nature of war. Such patterns of discourse, repeated time and again in the discourse (by politicians, military leaders, academics, journalists, and internet commentators), help the public to accommodate itself to this abnormal situation. In the same way, these metaphors help leaders to convince the public of the rationality and necessity of war.

For example, Tony Blair defended his decision to send British soldiers to the Second Gulf War in 2003 by using metaphors of progress—the successful attainment of goals (in the future)—as opposed to metaphors of regression, which reflect the failure to reach goals (in the past). These metaphors mirror the choices faced by the Labour Party and its leader, Blair, and thus establish the expected party policy: always go forward. Blair was willing to accept nothing but progress, and thus he presented himself as a strong and reliable leader who would not be swayed by difficulty or criticism (Semino 2008). The metaphoric description of a particular problem or situation reflects the speaker’s perceptions of it and establishes his or her preferred solution (Chilton 2004: 202).

In this context, the rhetorical power of metaphors of movement, widely encountered in political discourse, is worth mentioning. One example is the metaphor that depicts the European common currency (the Euro) as a train that must progress at the same speed and in the same direction with all its cars in order to avoid derailment. This metaphor reflects a specific perspective that urges European governments to adopt a uniform monetary policy and act in complete economic harmony in order to ensure the success of the European Monetary Union (Musolff 2004: 30; Charteris-Black 2005: 54–152). Musolff presents examples of manipulative rhetorical baggage evoked by metaphors. The metaphors that he discusses express hostility toward the language of immigrants in Britain, such as the description of roads in British cities as streets in Bombay or Karachi (Musolff 2019: 257–66) and Coronation Street as having been relocated from Britain to Pakistan.

**3. Analysis and Discussion**

**3.1 Classification of Metaphors**

Both single-word metaphors and metaphoric phrases were included when selecting metaphors. The metaphors were classified according to the field from which they were taken. The subjects that the speaker wished to address through the metaphors were examined, as were the metaphors’ rhetorical characteristics.[[4]](#footnote-4)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category of metaphor** | **No. of metaphors** | **% of total** |
| Natural phenomena | 6 | 0.2857 |
| Animals | 2 | 0.095 |
| Commerce | 1 | 0.0476 |
| War | 4 | 0.1904 |
| Travel | 7 | 0.3333 |
| Supernatural | 1 | 0.0476 |
| Total | 21 | 100% |

**3.1.1 Metaphors from the Domain of Nature**

Metaphors from the domain of nature exist in all religions. In the Hebrew Bible, for example, one reads “A person is like a tree of the field” (Deut. 20:19). That is, just as investing in a seed will yield a sturdy tree and excellent fruit, so is a child like a seed; investing in him will pay off when he turns into a stable adult imbued with values. In the Quran, we read: “We have handed the Quran to you [the Prophet Muhammad] for the deliverance of man from darkness to light,” i.e., from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

Arafat in this study is particularly inclined to adopt transparent metaphors from the domain of nature because they are pointed, reflective of direct speech, and decodable with no need for deep thinking.

In examples 1, 2, and 3, Arafat uses metaphorical concepts associated with water and the movement of vast quantities of water, as in whirlpool, sea, and wellspring. The metaphors in examples 1 and 2 reflect an inability to break free of the cycle of violence and return to the negotiating table. They point an accusing finger at Israel for the impasse in the negotiations and convey a need for bold, frequent steps to revive them. The metaphor in sentence 3 that describes Palestine as a “wellspring of love and peace” also expresses a willingness to renew negotiations, since it implies that the Palestinian people always strive to resolve conflicts through peaceful means and negotiations. Notably in this context, metaphorical use of the concept of “flood” is traditionally encountered (as both a verb and a noun) in the context of migration, especially in defense of anti-immigration ideologies and processes.

**Nature metaphors**

1. “We drowned in a **whirlpool of violence and terrorism**.” (*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p1. col. 2). The whirlpool is a metaphor for involvement in acts of terrorism. It invokes imagery of a maelstrom of dark colors that are associated with destruction and blood, like black and red. It is evident that this metaphor is charged with emotion.

2. “Our dream of freedom, independence, and self-determination cannot be fulfilled in a **sea of blood and tears.**” (*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p. 19, Col. 6). The sea as a metaphor for the many occurrences of terrorist acts. It invokes imagery of a bloodstained red mass without borders, like a sea. The metaphor is emotionally charged and is intended to deter violence.

3. “Palestine the blessed land, the cradle of culture and holiness and the **wellspring of love and peace**.” The wellspring is a metaphor for abundance, an inexhaustible source of love, peace, and adherence to the peace process. (*Al-Quds*, June 3, 1997, Col. 8).

4. “Holy Jerusalem, **the gem of our land and our eternal pearl.”** (*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 4, 1996, p.2, col. 5).

Jerusalem is described through images of precious stones, and the metaphor invokes prestige and sublime splendour, a kind of supreme beauty that testifies to the Arafat’s great emotional feeling for the city, and helps to justify his calls for Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state.

5. “Terrorism is trying to rewind the hands of the clock after the **sun of peace** has risen on a beautiful dream we called a ‘**new Middle East.**’” (*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p.19. col. 6). The phrase “the sun of peace” is a metaphor for optimal peace. The sun is an established literary symbol of success, and invokes images of positive energy radiating down onto a new Middle East, which is a political symbol of a new future in the region.

6. “We must keep the **embers of this dream burning** and protect holy Jerusalem, the pearl of Palestine, the flower of her city, and her beating heart.” (*Al-Quds*, July 2, 1998, col. 4). The “burning embers” of “this dream” is a metaphor that describes a spark, the precious essence of the Palestinian dream. Later, the speaker creates metaphorical identifications with a fixed object and a shifting base: Jerusalem is likened to a precious stone to emphasize its grace and prestige, a flower to reflect its splendor and radiance, and a beating heart to convey its centrality to a Palestinian state, since the Palestinians view East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state.

**3.1.2 Animal metaphors**

Diversity of cultures had a key role in the "birth" of metaphors from the animal world. For instance, in the Persian language, they say " He is a fox," and in English, "He is an owl." These two metaphors have approximately the same meaning: wisdom and cleverness. However, the former connotes somewhat something negative because it implies employing cleverness for deception and cunning. The second, in contrast, somewhat connotes something positive because it implies employing cleverness for positive purposes. (Rouhi & Mahand 2011: 253 )

 One can see the role of culture in formation/composition of metaphor from the world of animals. This is crystal clear when we see how the same animal reflects different traits in different cultures. For example, the owl in Persian culture expresses something evil and is used to describe an evil person. The dog is well known for its loyalty in different cultures. There are animal metaphors used to praise a certain person given his positive qualities. For example, "He is Lion" describes bravery of a person. In contrast, there are metaphors used to mock a certain person and belittle his value. "He is a chicken" is a case in point. It describes a coward. (Rouhi & Mahand 2011: 253 )

 Some of the animal metaphors focus on external appearance of the animal itself. For example, "He is an elephant" is used to imply that a person is overweight/ obese while "He is Lion" indicates bravery. People unanimously agree that the lion enjoys this quality. This quality describes a type of people who possess bravery.

The metaphor “talons of the occupation” in example 1 below emphasizes the extraordinary aggression of the Israeli side and its adherence to its policies of occupation, like a predator mercilessly sinking its talons into its prey. The metaphor of the “young lions” in example 2 reflects stubborn resistance to the Israeli occupation and the extraordinary emotional strength that will ultimately be reflected in the victory of the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

1. “Jerusalem must be rescued from the **talons** of the occupation” (*Al-Sha’ab*, March 16, 1998, p. 15, col. 5). The phrase “talons of the occupation” is a metaphor that paints the settlers as predators with talons.

2. “Until a **young lion** unfurl the Palestinian flag on the walls of Jerusalem.” (*Al-Ayam*, May 5, 1999, p.18, col. 3). The phrase “young lion” is a metaphor for the best of youth.

**3.1.3 Trade metaphors**

The negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israeli government can be seen as similar to trading activity, and as in any trade, there is profit and loss. Arafat expresses his disgust at the exploitative nature of the Israeli government in the negotiations, since it is unwilling to make concessions for the sake of achieving peace, while expecting the Palestinians to make such concessions, a position that renders negotiations fruitless and bellicose.

1. “The Palestinian people are the only ones paying the price of peace.” *(Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 4, 1996, p. 2, col. 7).

“Paying a price” as a metaphor for making concessions results in the loss of money or soul of the party making the compromises, since the Palestinians suffer from terrible living conditions and are willing to make far-reaching concessions for the sake of peace. This is in contrast to the Israeli government, which, although it desires peace, is not willing to make significant concessions to achieve it.

**3.1.4 Military Metaphors**

The domain of war remains one of the most popular sources of metaphors in politics. This domain, in which political activities are perceived as war, is usually employed metaphorically for all types of human struggle and conflict (Ifeanyichukwu, Kadiri, Goodluck & Blessing, 2018, 95–96), For example, the metaphorical expression “war on terror” has been an integral element of American foreign policy since September 11, 2001, evidently reflecting the principal American strategy for defense against terror attacks (Silberstein 2002, 1–17).

The metaphor “the army of unemployment” refers to the growing joblessness among the Palestinian population, a direct result of the Israeli occupation. The metaphor of “the alarm bell” reflects the dangers of the uncontrolled Israeli occupation, which is threatening to rebuild the Temple on Palestinian land in East Jerusalem. The phrase “old-new wounds” is a metaphor for the ongoing pain resulting from Israel’s blatant disregard of the UN resolution. It emphasizes the constant disappointment of the Palestinians regarding the conduct of the Israeli government and especially over the implementation of the UN resolutions. The phrase “strategic option” suggests the willingness of the Palestinians to renew the peace talks at any time.

**Examples:**

1. “100,000 new workers are joining the great army of unemployment.” (*Al-Quds*, March 14, 1996, p.19, col. 6).

The “**army** of unemployment” is a hyperbolic metaphor to express the concept of a large number of unemployed workers. The number of unemployed people in reality is certainly less.

2. “Our principled, stable, and permanent hold on peace and peace talks is a **strategic option** from which there is no retreat.” *Al-Quds*, June 3, 1997, p.23, col. 4).

The phrase “strategic option” is a metaphor for a diplomatic act of negotiation.

3. “I will sound the **alarm bell** about the plot to build the Temple.” (*Al-Quds*, December 10, 1997).

The phrase “the alarm bell” functions as a metaphor for warning.

4. “And he opened many **old-new wounds**, especially relating to the implementation of UN resolutions.” (*Al-Sha’ab*, March 16, 1998).

The “old-new wounds” are a metaphor for bad political relations.

**3.1.5 Travel Metaphors**

Travel metaphors are very common and familiar in English. Travel destinations (Semino 2008, 81–82) are planned in the manner of stops that need to be reached. Therefore, forward motion reflects a change for the better, as in growth and success, whereas reverse motion mirrors failure and backsliding. It was in this context that we explained Tony Blair’s “journey” metaphor in the Introduction.

In the examples below, Arafat uses travel metaphors mainly to emphasize the threats to the peace process that are lurking on both sides, but especially that of Israel, which was causing difficulties for the peace process and sought to put the final nails in its coffin, since it is the Palestinian people who are under occupation by Israel, which has disregarded their legitimate and justified rights. The metaphors “dead-end street,” “delays and obstacles,” and “red line” serve to emphasize the clearly unreasonable conditions that Israel set for the renewal of peace talks with the Palestinians. These conditions create distractions and obstacles to the peace process and turn the peace talks to run into difficulties.

The metaphors “burning the bridges” across which the “peace train” is traveling and the “terminus” at which the train is supposed to arrive resemble the metaphor that appeared in *The Independent* (UK) in January 1999: the European common currency (the Euro) as a train that must progress at the same speed and in the same direction with all its cars; otherwise, it will derail and shatter. The point is that the countries that adopted the Euro need to coordinate and harmonize their policies if they wish to enjoy economic success. The metaphors “first stop [on the way to somewhere],” “peace train,” “bridges,” and heading in a “particular direction” reflect optimism for the renewal for the peace process, its revitalization, and the establishing of peace, despite the stubborn position of the Israeli government and its repeated attempts to create difficulties for the Palestinians so as to scupper the renewal of the peace process.

**Examples:**

1. “The many, continuous delays and obstacles that this government places in the way of the progress of the peace process…” (*Al-Sha’ab*, 16 March 1998, p.15, col. 6.)

Delays and obstacles on the metaphorical road creating disruptions in the peace process.

2. “The peace process in the region is going through an acute crisis and has reached a dead- end street.” (*Al-Quds*, December 12, 1997, p. 19, col. 7.)

The complicated situation or conditions that Israel creates for the Palestinians and that are difficult to overcome are a “dead-end street.”

3. “This day…should be the point of departure on the journey to committing to a great national, Arab, and global effort.” (*Al-Ayam*, May 5, 1995, p. 18, col. 3.)

The “point of departure” as a metaphor for the beginning of a political movement.

4. “There are attempts by extremists on both sides to burn the bridges between us so that the peace train cannot will travel over them.” (*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 2, 1996, p. 2, col. 7.)

The “peace train” as a metaphor for the ongoing peace process and the bridge as a metaphor for a positive relationship between the two parties to the process.

5. “There is no escaping [the fact that] the peace train will reach its final stop.” (*Al-Haya Al-Jadida*, June 4, 1996, p. 2, col. 5.)

A “final stop” as a metaphor for the goal of peaceful coexistence.

6. “Today, we walked a good part of the way together in the direction of a Palestinian state.” (*Al-Quds*, December 31, 1995.)

Walking in a certain direction as a metaphor for achieving a goal, i.e., a Palestinian state, which is perceived by Arafat as the objective of the peace process.

7. “Jerusalem is a red line…and there is no one among us who would be willing to give up a single speck of land from Holy Jerusalem.” (*Al-Quds*, July 2, 1998).

A “red line” as a road sign that advises caution or is an order to stop is a metaphor for preventing negotiations on a particular issue due to its extreme sensitivity.

**6. Supernatural metaphors**

There is a direct and immediate connection between a particular event and its meaning, e.g., animal tracks in a certain area indicate that a certain animal passed through that area. In the desert, certain signs are immediately understood by trackers, but non-trackers are unable to decipher these signs and understand their meaning. Beyond this, there are phenomena that are outside our daily experiences and the limits of our imagination, i.e., the supernatural.

The legends have it that the Arabs have three impossibilities: *Ghoul*, *Anqāa* and *al-khel al-wafī*. The *ghoul* is a legendary creature/evil spirit or demon in Muslim folklore and fables. This creature is ugly, savage and large. His stories are told to frighten children. The *Anqāa* is a legendary bird/griffon which has a long neck and feared by all due to its size and supernatural strength. The *khel al-wafī* is a bosom friend who never abandons his/friend in times of distress.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Examples:**

1. The city of Jerusalem needs to be saved from the ghoul of this spreading settlement. (*Al-Quds*, December 10, 1997, p. 19, col. 6.)

The phrase “the ghoul of the spreading settlement” is a metaphor likening the settlements to predatory ghouls, who are famous in Arabic legends for eating corpses and mercilessly devouring anything that stands in their way. Thus, stopping the settlements and declaring war against them and the settlements is justified.

**3.2 How do the metaphors in Arafat’s political discourse create concepts?**

Conceptualization of the target domain through the source domain is referred to in cognitive semantics as mapping. The source domain is mapped onto the target domain, but not the other way around. Thus, in the metaphor “life is a vessel,” we perceive the concept of life through the concept of a vessel but we do not perceive the concept of a vessel by way of the concept of life. The metaphor “love is a journey” is based on the image of the road, and is reflected in many English-language expressions, for example: the lovers are at a crossroads; the lovers are at a dead end; their relationship has gone so awry as to have no way back; the lovers have come down a long, hard path, and the like. Each domain, source and target, has its own characteristics: the journey has passengers, means of transportation, a route, obstacles, and more. In love relationships there are lovers, events, development, and so on. The metaphor links the characteristics of the source domain to the characteristics of the target domain: lovers are travelers, the course of the relationship is the route, the difficulties in the relationship are obstacles in the path, and so on (Livnat 2014, 124).

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (animal). The map from the source domain, **nature**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Nature** | **Target: Politics** |
| The whirlwind of violence and terrorism | Involvement in acts of violence and terrorism |
| A sea of blood and tears | The many acts of terrorism that had taken place |
| The spring of love and peace | An inexhaustible source of love and peace, and a constant willingness to revitalize the peace process and adhere to it |
| The gem of our country and our eternal pearl | The supreme beauty, and the special and sublime status of the city of Jerusalem |
| The sun of peace | A new future in the Middle East |
| The embers of the dream | The constant willingness and unfading ambition of the Palestinians to renew the peace process and achieve a lasting peace with Israel |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (Animal).. The map from the source domain, **Animal**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Animal** | **Target: Politics** |
| The talons of the occupation | The settlers described as predatory beasts |
| Young lions | The best of the brave Palestinian youth who stood bravely in the face of the occupation |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (trade). The map from the source domain, **trade**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Trade** | **Target: Politics** |
| Paying a price as a metaphor for a transaction that causes financial or emotional losses for the giver/buyer | The giving of the Palestinian people reflected in their financial and emotional losses |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (military). The map from the source domain, **military**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Military** | **Target: Politics** |
| Army of unemployment | Huge numbers of unemployed people |
| A strategic option | Diplomatic act of negotiation |
| The alarm bell | A warning |
| Old-new wounds | Bad political affairs |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (travel). The map from the source domain, **travel**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: Travel** | **Target: Politics** |
| Delays and obstacles | Disruptions to the peace process |
| Dead-end street | The complicated situation or conditions that Israel is imposing on the Palestinians |
| Departure point [of a journey] | Process of political upheaval |
| Bridges | Positive relations between the two nations |
| Peace train | The ongoing peace process |
| Final station | The goal of peace |

The target domain (politics and political activity) is mapped by the source domain (supernatural). The map from the source domain, **the** **supernatural**,to the target domain, **politics**, is shown in detail below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source: The Supernatural** | **Target: Politics** |
| The ghoul of the spreading settlements | The phenomenon of the settlements as the legendary predatory ghoul, known for eating dead bodies |

**5. Summary**

Arafat tends to weave metaphors into his political discourse, metaphors conveying semantic power and force as a rhetorical strategy that serves his message. Arafat sees metaphor as a positive tool for argument. It is worth noting that all the metaphors analyzed in this article were intended to cast a spotlight on the suffering of the Palestinian people under a policy of occupation and settlement and to emphasize that Israel does not truly desire peace but rather an ongoing occupation and the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people. Additionally, these metaphors emphasize that Arafat is adhering to the peace process, and is fully committed to it—in contrast to Israel, which imposes unreasonable conditions and creates difficulties for the Palestinians as a condition for restarting the peace process, with the goal of preventing the peace process from being restarted at all.

Most of the metaphors gathered here relate to metaphors of travel and natural phenomena. It seems that Arafat focuses on nature metaphors since they are relatively simple and easy to understand, and convey their messages clearly—in contrast to more complex metaphors that require in-depth thought to decipher. About half of the metaphors relate to moving water, such as the sea and a whirlpool, and express being caught up in acts of violence and terrorism, and distance from the peace process. In contrast, the metaphor of the “wellspring of love and peace” expresses an abundance of love and adherence to the peace process, and continuous optimism for its renewal and fulfilment.

Arafat also uses metaphors relating to travel and transport, such as “a dead-end street,” “delays and obstacles,” and “a red line,” to emphasize the clearly unreasonable conditions that Israel has set for renewing peace process with the Palestinians. These conditions create disruptions and obstacles to the peace process, and stall negotiations.

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1. In other words, to establish a Palestinian state alongside Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See, for example, Koller (2012: 19-38) where she presents a working model for analyzing collective identity in discourse which integrates a socio-cognitive approach as a major strand in Critical Discourse Analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See further in Lakoff 1991: 25–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In this context, see: Abadi 1988, pp. 56-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Many people think that it is possible to find true friends and this is not an imaginary concept. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)