ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Critical Metaphor Analysis on Malaysia's Gazetted Metaphors amid the Movement Control Order: A COVID-19 Episode

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ABSTRACT

The turbulent times of the Coronavirus crisis is a world-changing episode that keeps every single adult on the planet pondering not only on the silhouette of the new black but also on the mushrooming metaphors. As a linguistic representation emerging upon a shift in word or phrase usage at the unexpected context of occurrence, the metaphor thereby causes semantic tension. Nevertheless, the gazetted metaphors in the mainstream English newspapers amid the nationwide Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia is distinctive. Implementing the Pragglejaz's Metaphor Identification Procedure, this study attempts to highlight and reveal its figurative meaning. In order to yield a comprehensive elucidation of these conceptual expressions; the analytical framework of this study constitutes a combination of the linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic standards to rationalize these metaphors. The data of this study is analysed via a three-stepped Critical Metaphor Analysis that comprises metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation, and metaphor explanation.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The classic metaphorical streak of William Shakespeare; from Julius Caesar; *"beware the ides of March"* had made a mark in Malaysian history in March 2020; denoting a phase of tragedy. The month took off with the collapse of the people-chosen government led by the then oldest-serving Prime Minister in the world, Tun. Dr. Mahathir Mohammad who also coined the national ideal 'Vision 2020' almost three decades ago with the dream of a utopic nation. In about a fortnight, following the 'Sheraton Move', at the end of the country's most intense political crisis, which had steered the comeback of the previously overthrown government, the deadly COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia took root as the numbers of positive- cases amplified sharply, paving the path to the nationwide Movement Control Order (MCO).

Initially the Malaysian Government had only issued the Movement Control Order, effective 18 to 31 March 2020 but was later extended; every two weeks. This partial lockdown geared a series of precautionary measures to curb further outbreaks of coronavirus cases in the country, including shutting down of all government and private premises except for those involved in "essential services" and some sectors with government permission, as well as travel bans on all foreigners entering Malaysia and on Malaysians leaving the country. The 'essential services' include, amongst others, banking services, e-commerce, electricity and water services, food supply and preparation services, transportation (air/land/sea), and telecommunication services. As for Malaysians stranded overseas, they were allowed to

return, on condition that that they undergo medical examinations upon their arrival and subject themselves to a 14-day quarantine.

Since all government and private sites have been ordered to close and cease operations temporarily, no public gatherings, including religious meetings, recreational activities and social gatherings, were permitted throughout this period, calling out to postponement and cancellation of pre-scheduled events. In the same vein, a new lifestyle and standard operating procedure was a requisite as Malaysians kept abreast in witnessing the eradication of "the-rona" virus. Malaysians had sort to embrace the new normal, which entailed caring, praying, working, studying, celebrating, and even mourning virtually, from the comfort of ones' homes.

As a consequence of this deepening crisis, the population at large was bound to suffer the highest risk of unemployment and precarity, besides unprecedented challenges; even to the extent of indelible imprints. Moreover, in many homes, issues related to the domestic violence and its chief source, deteriorating mental health were on a rise. Trapped in the house, the helpless Malaysians had to rely much on the government policies, security support, and stimulus packages. This in turn has become the defining issue of the freshly monarchy-elected eighth Prime Minister of Malaysia, while the Malaysian medical force had outdone the first-world countries to emerge, as the world's best in healthcare, especially in having stymied the number of COVID-19 cases and related deaths during the third phase of the MCO.

Fascinatingly, the episode of the Coronavirus crisis in Malaysia has been viewed in light of an array of metaphorical lexemes. Although metaphors generally lurk in our language, thoughts, and assessments of people and situations, yet this pandemic has headed an outburst of new lexemes that were gazetted on the mainstream newspapers. In relation to the previously mentioned, Lakoff (1986) and Gibbs (1994) have regarded the identification of metaphor as a matter of finding indirect meaning. Therefore, when someone says *online is the new black,* and his or her utterance does not apply to something black but to a trend, the word *black* has been utilised indirectly to convey a sense that differs from its straightforward application. This concept of metaphors, according to Semino (2008, p.1), is the dealing with "the phenomenon whereby we talk about something in terms of something else" which is highly valued.

On the other hand, Steen (2007) proposes that "the metaphorical meaning may be found frequently enough for it to need description as a conventionalised meaning of the term". In the case of *cabin fever*, its conventionalised meaning has in fact added to the Macmillan Advanced Learner's Dictionary based on a corpus research. The use is analysed as styling "the impatient or bored feeling that you get when you have not been outside for a long time". The shifting of metaphor from its time-honoured position of novel and deviant language use, to the conventional and the regular is deemed as an eye-catching transformation in the 38 years of linguistic metaphor research.

Despite the indirectness criterion being a decent opening to the finding of metaphors in language as observed in the studies of Lakoff (1993) and Gibbs (1994), and which was further linked to the notion of incongruity; as read in the works of Cameron (2003), Charteris-Black (2004), and Steen (2007), it is not sufficient. The reason being, it is too broad – as metaphors are also based on salient distinctions and contrast between the two semantic or conceptual domains present in the expression; at the same time – too narrow to capture all linguistic forms of expression of the metaphor. (Steen, 2007). However, the idea of cross-domain mapping which has become customary in cognitive linguistics brought new hope; even if ensuing conceptual analysis is demanded to uncover the intended meaning of such metaphorical mappings.

Brimful with the aforementioned hurdles, the identification of metaphor in language and its use surges with the invention of the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) that furnishes for the most frequent expression of metaphor in conceptual structure of metaphorical language (Group, 2007; Steen, 2002; Steen, 2005; Dorst *et al.*, 2011). This procedure stunningly lies on a strong foundation of a decision made on the theoretical framework that has a cognitive linguistics approach to metaphor with a broad view of discourse analysis, by adopting the Lakoff and Johnson (2017) view of metaphor as a cross-domain mapping for which a model was embedded within the framework. In addition, the lexical-unit was preferred as the unit of analysis in relation to concepts and referents.

Van Dijk (2017) avowed that perhaps there is no other discursive practice besides daily conversation, which is engaged in regularly by so many people as news in the press. News texts are also dense in information and attempts to persuade readers into ways of thinking and behaving that are consistent with their values. Thus, varieties of lexico grammatical resources and rhetorical strategies have been deployed to support this objective; allowing the MIP to be transparently applied. Although there are numerous studies on metaphors during a pandemic, the specialised investigation focused on gazetted

metaphors found in the national print-media discourse of Malaysia is rare and inadequate. This paper then aims to fill in the gap by means of the Critical Metaphor Analysis put forth by Charteris-Black (2004) as a new complement to Critical Discourse Analysis, to yield corpus-based data without neglecting the rhetorical function of the metaphors.

Research Objectives

By examining the metaphorical expressions on the Coronavirus crisis, which were gazetted on the mainstream English newspapers in Malaysia amid the Movement Control Order, this paper aims to:

1. Identify the literal and metaphorical meaning of the lexical units and the domains realised.

2. Determine the metaphorical mappings of the lexical units.

3. Examine the social agency that is involved in the production of metaphors and their social role in persuasion.

Theoretical Framework

Resounding on the investigative steps of Cameron & Low (2012), Charteris-Black (2004) establishes the three analytical stages of critical metaphor analysis comprising metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation. This approach to metaphor identification has two stages: The first requires a close reading of a sample of texts with the aim of identifying candidate metaphors. The words commonly used with a metaphorical sense are then, classified as metaphorical keywords and it is possible to measure the presence of such keywords quantitatively in the corpus. The second stage is a further qualitative phase in which corpus contexts are examined to determine whether each use of a keyword is metaphoric or literal. Metaphor identification involves establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that determine them. This involves the identification of, and where feasible, conceptual keys. Conceptual metaphors is defined as "a formal statement of any idea that is hidden in the figure of speech that can be inferred from a number of metaphorical expressions and assist to resolve their semantic tension". Subsequently, the conceptual keys is noted to be "inferred from a number of conceptual metaphors and is known as a higher level metaphor that explains how several conceptual metaphors are related (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.15). Hence, conceptual metaphors and conceptual keys are abstract inferences from the metaphors provided by linguistic instantiations. The inference of conceptual metaphors from the surface linguistic metaphors can help us identify the patterns of relationship among metaphors that account for their meaning. Similarly, interrelating conceptual metaphors through the identification of conceptual keys can help to account for coherence in particular discourse. A hierarchical cognitive model of metaphor is exemplified as Figure 1 below:
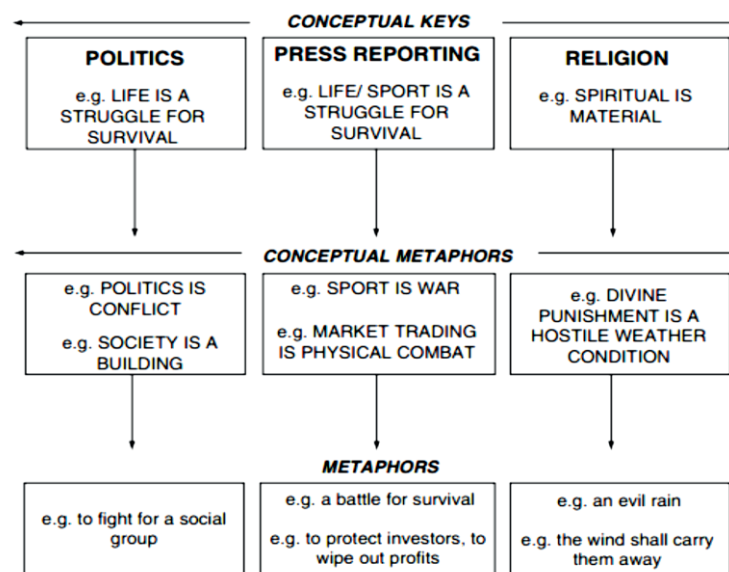

Figure 1: A Hierarchical cognitive model of Metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.15)

Explanation of metaphors involves identifying the social agency that is involved in their production and their social role in persuasion. It unearths the formation process of conceptual metaphors and conceptual keys and enables us to know about the persuasive function of metaphors. In a sense, it is identifying the discourse function of metaphors that permits us to establish their ideological and rhetorical motivation. According to Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), there is no deterministic motivation of metaphor use and the communicative purpose within a particular context will activate the affective potential of metaphor by exploiting individual and social resources. Individual resources can be sub-divided into three components including cognitive and affective (experiential meaning), pragmatic (contextual meaning) and linguistic (linguistic meaning) considerations. The social bases for metaphor choice are ideology (political belief), culture (group identity) and history (collective memory) (Charteris-Black, 2014). Traditional approaches to metaphor exclusively focus on linguistic considerations, while cognitive linguistic approaches exclusively concentrate on the individual experiential basis of metaphor. CMA insists that the core function of metaphor is persuasion, which is explained with reference to both social and individual considerations. The discourse model of CMA for metaphor is illustrated as Figure 2.

Methodology

Corpus Data

The news discourse is particularly a rich source of figurative language, as news contributes to building and adapting knowledge and beliefs while "metaphor is an essential part of the way we deal with novel and current events" (Kennedy, 2000, p.209). Hence, it is not startling to find a large body of research on metaphor in the news discourse. For instance; in the determination of revealing ideologies and persuasive effects in political discourse, metaphorical language in news texts (Chiang & Duann, 2007; Kitis & Milapides, 1997; Musolff, 2006; Zinken, 2003) business discourse and financial reporting (Koller, 2008; Charteris-Black, 2004) and sports reporting (Charteris-Black, 2004). Biber (2012, p.104-105) points out that "the news production process allows journalists to carefully construct their texts and make precise lexical choices", resulting in news excerpts to be a favourite corpus under study.

The corpus used in this study are the mainstream English-language news editorials in Malaysia on the Coronavirus Crisis, which are accessible virtually during the nationwide Movement Control Order (MCO); such as the *The Star*, *News Strait Times*, *The Malay Mail*, *Malaysiankini*, *Malaysian Insider*, and *The Borneo Post*. Apart from the fact, that the language of these mainstream media is formal, it is published in Standard Malaysian English.

Instrumentation

The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) as the result of a six-year work by ten experienced metaphor researchers called the Pragglejaz Group aims to offer an instrument for capturing the bulk of the metaphorical expressions (Group, 2007). It is a straightforward tool for linguistic metaphor identification in natural discourse and thought to be an easy operational method for metaphor identification. This is due to the essence of the procedure, which only seeks to find a more basic sense rather than that employed as the metaphorical discourse meaning.
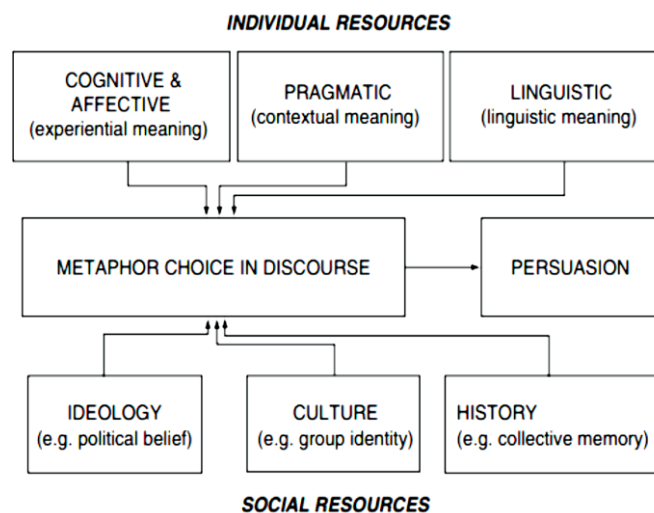

Figure 2: A Discourse Model for Metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 248)

Since this study adopts the principle of 'one signifier, different signified', in other words, 'one wording, different meanings' (Semino, 2008, 11-12) the following four steps are taken with reference to the Metaphor Identification Procedure to unveil the expressions of the lexical metaphors in actual usage (Dorst et al., 2011, p. 25):

1. Identify the literal and metaphorical meaning of the lexical units and the domains realised.

2. Check for a more basic meaning of the lexical unit. Establish its identity if there is.

3. Examine whether the contextual meaning of the lexical unit is relative to the more basic meaning by some form of similarity. (more concrete, precise, human-oriented)

4. Determine whether the more basic meaning of the lexical unit is sufficiently distinct from the contextual meaning. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

Metaphorical meanings rely on a contrast between a contextual meaning and a more basic meaning; advocating that the more basic meaning has to be adequately distinct from the contextual meaning for the latter to be viewed as potentially partaking in another semantic or conceptual domain. Therefore, the subsequent practical guidelines as outlined by Dorst *et al.* (2011) were adhered to establish the metaphorical meanings of the lexical items:

1. When a lexical unit has more than one separate, numbered sense description within its grammatical category, these senses are regarded as sufficiently distinct.

2. When a lexical unit has only one numbered sense description within its grammatical category, this counts as the basic sense and any difference with the contextual sense of the item under investigation will count as sufficient distinctness.

Analysing Procedures

This research adopts the Charteris-Black's (2004) CMA approach of identification, interpretation and explanation to metaphor analysis. The ***identification stage*** comprises two steps: Step 1 involves closely examining sample texts to identify candidate metaphors, and Step 2 deals with investigating corpus contexts to determine whether a keyword is literal or metaphorical.

The ***interpretation stage*** is concerned with establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that determine whether this keyword is a conceptual metaphor or not, whereas the ***explanation stage*** deals with the identification of the social agency that is involved in the production of metaphors and their social role in persuasion.

This study; qualitative and exploratory in nature, begins with a preparation for the checklist of the lemmas. All these lexical items are synthesized further.

Not all the lemmas listed above have their items realized as metaphorically used. Either these lemmas show no existence in the corpus or they exist but only have literal meaning, namely non-metaphorical expressions. These lemmas undergo a qualitative analysis in order to isolate metaphorical expressions from non-metaphorical expressions, using the online Macmillan Dictionary (https://www.macmillandictionary.com/open-dictionary). The lexical units which have a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the present context, were identified as metaphorical expressions as suggested by Dorst et al. (2011). For example, in the first, ***fight*** has the literal meaning while in second, it is a metaphorical expression.

1. The number of people involved in the ***fight*** grew to 11 as they were calling their friends and family members to come over. After discussions with the policemen, they refused to adhere to the inspector's instruction to stay indoor during the MCO period. (Solhi, 2020)

Table 1: The List of Lexical Units

Mak Cik Kiah	Cabin Fever	Ketua Rumah	Crumble	Saving grace
Drive a Wedge between	Soft Landing	Doreamon	Flattening the Curve	Stress baking
Tabligh Cluster	Baby Steps	Mass Gathering	Wave	Lockdown exit
Invisible Forces	Break the Chain	New Black	Active Cases	Open mind
Dust settles	Social Distancing	Zoombombing	Spike	Green light
Left-field	Win	Partial Lockdown	Beat	Balik kampung
Fight	Jihad	Frontliners	Stimulus Package	Holed up

2. "The enforcement of the three phases of the Movement Control Order (MCO) so far managed to flatten the curve in the **fight** against COVID-19 and Malaysia is now in the recovery phase," Health Ministry director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said. (Chan & Teoh, 2020)

Results and Discussion

Linguistic Level: Metaphor Identification

Table 2 presents the explored basic meanings of the lexical metaphors and their meanings in the text. It illustrates that the literal and the metaphorical context could be the same, such as the 'consequence' taken as *crumble*. These, however, highlight different aspects of the social domain, as shown in the following discussions. Conversely, the literal and the metaphorical context could be different, such as those of 'aviation' and 'business' construed by *soft landing*, as well as 'positive' and 'negative' which is understood in place of *active,* besides 'achievement' and 'solution' by way of *win.* This "process of provoking attitudinal response in readers depends on the relationship between the literal and the metaphorical meanings involved, and on the evaluative prosody in the co-text and context". Thus, each instance needs to be read from two perspectives literally in terms of the basic contemporary meaning, and metaphorically in terms of its meaning expressed in the present text". (Liu, 2018, p.6)

Nevertheless; some of the listed expressions, which were considered as novel metaphors in the initial stages of this research as they were not exercised vastly; thereby-heightening awareness of its semantic tension, were conventionalised and added recently to the corpus-based dictionaries with the top of mind definitions due to the COVID-19's widespread effect on the world. The Macmillan Dictionary surfaced phrases like *flatten the curve* as 'to delay the speed and spread of an epidemic in order to make it more manageable' and *social distancing* as 'taking steps such as encouraging working from home, closing schools, and cancelling large events in order to slow the spread of a disease' (Macmillan, n.d.). The term *stimulus package* has appeared as a recent addition in the Cambridge Dictionary but not in the Macmillan's (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). The latter however referred to the similar fiscal policy as *helicopter money* (Macmillan, n.d.).

Cognitive Level: Metaphor Interpretation

As observed by Lakoff and Johnson (2017), this significant evidence makes it hard to refute that conceptual metaphors are real and can explain much about the way we think. A vital aspect of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that the conceptual domain can be viewed as any coherent organization of experience. Metaphor here is inferred as conceptualizing one domain of experience in terms of another; TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN (Lakoff, 1993, p. 207).

The concrete source domain is recognised to be more physical, directly experienced, and better known than the abstract target domain, which is less directly experienced and known. For instance, we have coherently organized knowledge about journey that we rely on in understanding recovery, for instance *road* to recovery leading to a common conceptual metaphor; RECOVERY IS A JOURNEY. The projection of elements of the source domain actually onto the target domain is shown in Table 3.

The work of Lakoff and Johnson (2017) not only defined what a metaphor is but also more importantly proposed that our conceptual structures of the world are metaphorical. In view of cognitive linguistics, a significant metaphor for the transfer of meaning is that of 'mapping' from a source to a target domain, as a representation of the structural identity between them. Here, the term 'metaphorical expression' is referred to a linguistic expression such as a word, phrase, and sentence that acts as the surface realisation of a cross-domain mapping. (Lakoff in Ortany, 1993, p. 203-206) Hence, Charteris-Black (2004) suggests that this 'mapping' which encompasses a set of relations, transferred as knowledge of a set of properties, behaviour, and interrelationships as recognised in the source domain, is meant for both 'conceptual metaphor' and 'conceptual key'.

Part of the ontological correspondences and linguistic instantiations underlying the metaphorical mapping illustrated above are demonstrated as follows. The description of these conceptual levels further enhances understanding of their role in ideology for the reason that it provides a point of access to the cognitive mechanism under the linguistic instantiations.

Economy is Movement
Volatility of the economics indicates the movement especially during this unpredicatable situation of the pandemic.

1) "We are not perfect, but we are doing the best we can to pull through this crisis together, as one nation. God willing, we will come out stronger when this crisis ends and the **dust settles**," he said. ("Muhyiddin: 'We are not perfect, but we are doing the best we can'", 2020)

Table 2: The literal and metaphorical meanings associated with the identified lexical metaphor

Expressions of Lexical Metaphor	Literal meanings		Metaphorical meanings	
	Experiential meaning	Domain	Experiential meaning	Domain
Soft Landing	The process by which a plane or a space vehicle comes down to the ground in a gentle and safe way.	Movement *Aviation*	A good or easy solution to a political or economic difficulty	Economy *Business*
Baby Steps	Steps of a baby	Movement	Initial stages of a new endeavour; from little to stumbling.	Health
Break the Chain	Destroy a series of things of the same type that form a connected line	War	Stop the transmission/spread	Health
Win	To achieve victory in a war, battle, or argument	War *Achievement*	Overcome	Health *Solution*
Jihad	A holy war or fight that Muslims take part in to defend Islam	War	Fasting and penance to receive a blessing	Health
Fight	To try in a very determined way to achieve something	War	To try very hard to prevent something from happening or getting worse	Health
Tabligh Cluster	Members of an Islamic missionary movement that focuses on exhorting Muslims to return to practising their religion as it was practised during the lifetime of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.	Movement	The largest group of people affected by the Covid-19 in Malaysia.	Health
Invisible Forces	Someone or something that has a powerful influence on what happened, but not visible; with or without lenses.	War	Deadly micro-organism	Health
Dust settles	Very small pieces of dirt that cover surfaces inside buildings like a powder, falls downwards through the air or water until it reaches the ground or the bottom of something.	Movement	Calm down	Economy
Wave	A line of water that rises up on the surface of a sea, lake, or river.	Movement	A period of activity that is part of a series of similar periods.	Health
Active	Operating or working in a particular area or at a particular time.	Movement *Positive*	Tending to progress	Health *Negative*
Beat	To defeat someone in a game, competition, election, or battle	War	To succeed despite a difficult situation	Health
Inject	To put a drug or another substance into your body through the skin, using a needle and a syringe.	Movement	Add or insert (humour)	Emotion
Left-Field	In baseball, the part of the outfield that is left of home plate, or the position of the player who defends this area.	Direction	Unusual	Government
Doreamon	A robotic male cat	Animation *Animal*	A feminine character	Society *Gender*
Mass Gathering	Gathering of a large quantity	Space	Gathering of more than 10 people	Society
Black	The darkest colour	Space	Trend	Society
Partial lockdown	Partial: Incomplete Lockdown: a time when large numbers of people are ordered to stay at home either most or all of the time	Movement	Under a restricted movement order	Society
Front-liners	Someone directly involved in fighting during a war	War	Medical team, security forces, and government officers working during the Covid-19 outbreak.	Health
Saving grace	A good quality that makes it possible for you to accept someone or something that is bad in all other ways	Space	Consolation or option	Society
Stress baking	*Stress*: A worried or nervous feeling that stops you relaxing *Baking*: Cooking food in an oven	Movement	Baking due to being quarantined	Society

(*Continues*)

Table 2: (*Continued*)

Expressions of Lexical Metaphor	Literal meanings		Metaphorical meanings	
	Experiential meaning	Domain	Experiential meaning	Domain
Lockdown exit	An occasion when people stop being involved in a lockdown.	Movement	Lifting the restricted movement order	Society
Green light	A signal that gives traffic permission to move forward	Movement	Approval	Society
Hole up	If you holed up somewhere, you stay there, especially because you are hiding.	Space	Staying at home due to the nationwide movement control order.	Health
Crumble	To be broken into very small pieces	War *Consequence*	To stop being effective	Economy *Consequence*

Table 3: The Metaphorical Mappings of Road to Recovery

DOMAIN	Animation	Direction	Movement	Space	War
Economy			✓		✓
Emotion			✓		
Government		✓			
Health			✓	✓	✓
Society	✓		✓	✓	

2) The government may introduce a "*soft landing*" approach when removing the movement control order (MCO), says the Health Ministry. (Kaos, 2020)

Economy is War
The competitive characteristics of the economy clearly shouts out WAR. Due to the Coronavirus crisis, the economic landscape is reckoned shaky and is depicted in the sentence below.

3) The currency system as is today will *crumble* in the aftermath anyway. (Lim, 2020)

Emotion is Movement
Movements or actions are representation of emotions and vice versa.

4) "Avoid nagging your husband," another poster said, attempting to *inject* humour by using a voice similar to the anime character Doraemon – a blue robot cat popular across Asia. ("Outrage over Women Affairs Ministry's 'sexist' MCO advice", 2020)

Government is Direction
'Left field', which indicate defence is a terminology adapted from the domain of WAR and used metaphorically as 'unusual' in the social context.

5) Former law minister Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said today lambasted the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry (KPWKM) after it imparted some rather *left-field* advice to women, especially wives and mothers working from home, which it posted on its Facebook page yesterday, earning the ire of many. (Palansamy, 2020)

Health is Movement
The elements of health is considered as MOVEMENT (Kövecses, 2010, pp. 18-23) as it affects everything, from circulation to digestion to metabolism to immunity. Also health or illness begins with movements in society. In this case, the individuals who were tested positive for Coronavirus in Malaysia upon attending a religious gathering at the Sri Petaling Mosque were referred to as the tablighs or tabligh cluster.

6) The Sri Petaling *tabligh cluster* makes up most of COVID-19 cases in the country, with Dr Noor Hisham previously saying that five "generations" of positive cases had been linked to the gathering at the end of February and beginning of March this year. (Bedi, 2020)

Health is Space
Space is vital to health and makes way for both; good physical and mental health.

7) "Many of the students have been *holed up* at their universities for the past four weeks. There's no cluster detected among the students so far, and we will be able to screen them before they are sent home," he said. (Tan & Kaos, 2020)

Health is War
Many slots in the schema of WAR, such as break, win, fight, forces, front liners, beat, crumbles, combats, are found mapped onto the slots in the schema *of health*.

8) The MCO has been extended twice, with the latest extension set to end on April 28, as the nation

combats the outbreak of COVID-19 cases, which to date has infected 4,530 people and taken the lives of 73 people. (Chin, 2020)

In the month of Ramadhan, Muslim's fasting month, the '*jihad*' refers to a struggle within oneself against sin. Giving up the activities that one usually indulges in by staying at home is seen here as a sign of repentance.

9) Describing the effort to break the chain of the COVID-19 infection as a great sacrifice ***jihad*** by all Malaysians, he said everybody has been undergoing a tough period, which tested one's patience and strength. ("PM: Malaysians' sacrifices in fighting COVID-19 produce results", 2020)

Society is Animation
In a different view, a female politician had attempted to inject humour by portraying the Japanese anime character, Doraemon – a blue robot male cat as having a feminine tone and urged the wives at home to imitate its voice while speaking to their husbands to reduce domestic violence during this MCO period. A puzzled Twitter user in fact responded, "How did we go from preventing baby dumping, fighting domestic violence to some sad variant of the Obedient Wives Club?" (Yin, 2020).

10) In a subsequent poster on ways to educate one's spouse on doing household chores, to presumably avoid quarrelling, wives are advised to adopt a "***Doraemon-like***" tone and giggle coyly as opposed to "nagging". (Tan, 2020)

Society is Movement
Green light indicates safety and permission to move or act.

11) A total of 952 couples in Kedah who have been given the ***green light*** to get married during the movement control order (MCO) are allowed to do so at the District Religious Offices with minimal attendance. ("Green light for 952 Kedah couples to marry during MCO", 2020)

Society is Space
Space is created for what seems important and needs priority.

12) Home workouts are a ***saving grace*** for active people affected by the closure of gyms. (New Strait Times, 24 April 2020)

Socio-Cultural Analysis: Metaphor Explanation

The Critical Metaphor Analysis proposes that the amalgamation of both individual and social resources facilitate the achievement of the persuasive function of metaphor in a specific discourse. The articles in the Malaysian newspapers; for the most part were composed by local journalists. Therefore, the typical Malaysian ideology, group identity and collective memory are observed to be the main components for the social resource, which clearly influence the choice of metaphors.

A contemplation on the metaphors identified and interpreted earlier in this study elevates the current issues revolving around the economic, health, political, and social crisis amidst the global pandemic in Malaysia. As the loss of revenue and fear of retrenchment, have begun to haunt the citizens, the new government brawls to strike a balance between prioritizing the national economy and the public health, simultaneously scuffling to sustain their position and power, notwithstanding the opposition's condemnation over the decisions being made. The problem however lies in a few who are reluctant to cooperate and are ignorant of this life-threatening contagion while roaming around freely, without realising that they might pass on to others or get infected instead. The front liners then face the heightened number of cases; to either treat or arrest. Mindful of not risking the future; the authorities are unsurprisingly hesitant or rather careful in lifting the Movement Control Order as there are still active cases in the community. Contrariwise, the 'stay at home' regime has escalated domestic violence in the nation; prompting the government to show the way out, which in turn stirred chaos on gender inequality due to the unwarranted response given by a newly elected minister. On one end; the thousands of university students; held up in their campus residence look forward to the exodus of returning home during the fasting month of Ramadhan, while on the other mass gathering is forbidden; to point of cancelling weddings and restraining funerals of more than ten.

As for the individual resource, the division of the government and public makes the language in the news articles intense and magnifies the readers' interest. These linguistic instantiations then efficaciously dramatize the antagonism between various sectors and domains, thus accentuates the harshness of competition during this testing time of the pandemic. Meanwhile, it also augments morale within a group and heartens the members to strive against a mutual rival, the Coronavirus. These bellicose scenarios embellish the trials that establishments at home encounter hinting at a game of survival. In this facet, metaphor serves as a rhetorical device for the language

in these news features. The recurrent adoption of meta-phor can actually construct the cognitive model of safety, hygiene, and awareness in the mind of these readers, thus arousing their emotions and more attention to the devel-opment in the country from the pragmatic perspective.

Conclusion

Media is no exception when the manner we present abstract and complex ideas is suffused with metaphors. Executing the Pragglejaz's Metaphor Identification Procedure, this research explores the literal and metaphor-ical meaning of the metaphorical expressions gazetted on the English newspapers in Malaysia amid the Movement Control Order, enforced in the effort to break the chain transmission of the COVID-19 in the country and further determines the metaphorical mappings of the lexical units by identifying the domains realised. This study then exam-ines the social agency that is involved in the production of metaphors and their social role in persuasion. In order to yield a comprehensive elucidation of these conceptual expressions; the analytical framework adopted constitutes a combination of the linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic standards to rationalize these metaphors. The data is then analysed via a three-stepped Critical Metaphor Analysis that comprises metaphor identification, metaphor inter-pretation, and metaphor explanation, indicating that far from being mere rhetorical accompaniments, metaphors have profound influences on how we conceptualize and act with respect to important societal issues.

The findings reveal that the metaphors show frequent occurrences in the economy, health, and social discourse in the English newspapers in Malaysia, which is an expert journalists-to-non-expert readers' interaction media. The distinctness of the metaphors and issues featured during the pandemic is signalled via the 10 metaphori-cal mappings plotted in this research namely economy is movement, economy is war, emotion is movement, gov-ernment is direction, health is movement, health is space, health is war, society is animation, society is movement, and society is space. Nevertheless, for a more compre-hensive study of these metaphors, it is vital to capture all of the instances of the lemmas identified in the media texts as well as the lexemes by reading the concordance lines and performing a quantitative analysis.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

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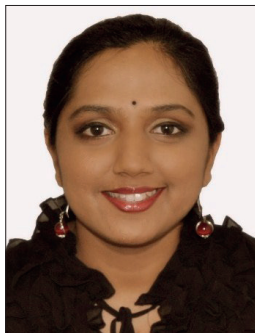
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