

COVID-19 Conceptual Metaphors in Indonesian Newspapers

Emi Nursanti, Erna Andriyanti & Ikha Adhi Wijaya

emi_nursanti@uny.ac.id

English Language Education Department, Faculty of Languages, Arts, and Cultures,
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, INDONESIA

Abstract

Conceptual metaphor plays a significant role in everyday communication as it is a fundamental aspect of the human mind and conceptualization. It reflects people's ways of thinking in responding to a phenomenon or event. To describe how online media in Indonesian report the COVID-19 pandemic metaphorically, the study would explain 1) the mapping of conceptual metaphors related to COVID-19, and 2) their cognitive functions or ways of thinking about COVID-19. This qualitative study analyzed metaphorical lexical units in three online newspapers in Bahasa Indonesia with local and national coverage: Kompas, Jawa Pos, and Kedaulatan Rakyat. The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) was used in the data collection process and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was used to analyze the data. The study found that Indonesians are rich in lexical items as source domains to conceptualize things related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The prominent source domains, inter alia, are WARFARE, DESTRUCTIVE FORCE, COLOR SPECTRUM, and MOVEMENT. The conceptual metaphors illustrate how people feel, act, and think about COVID-19. The dominance of lexical items in WARFARE and DESTRUCTIVE FORCE categories implies that the metaphors were used to raise people's awareness that they were in a difficult situation and needed to fight the virus together.

Keywords: conceptual metaphors; cognitive functions; COVID-19 pandemic; Indonesian newspapers

Article information

Received:
28 December
2023

Revised:
16 January
2024

Accepted:
25 February
2024

Introduction

Three years after the unanticipated global outbreak which brought detrimental impacts on the world's health systems and a wide range of effects on many facets of life, the Indonesian government has officially revoked

the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The President said that starting on June 21, 2023, Indonesia was declared to have switched from a pandemic to an endemic period (Kemensetneg, 2023). Throughout those three years of crisis, the role of mass media is crucial in spreading information

about the COVID-19 pandemic as well as providing information on public health policies and actions implemented by WHO and nations suffering from this outbreak. This causes people to be familiar with and have to understand various medical and public health terms as well as terminology in preventive measures. Various concepts and terms that emerged during the pandemic became common and widely known to the public. This research examines explicitly conceptual metaphors in Bahasa Indonesia in reporting the COVID-19 pandemic in three online newspapers published in Bahasa Indonesia.

In the perspective of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is a tool for conceptualizing a domain of experience (target domain) by using another domain (source domain) and is known as a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). The correspondence between the source and target domains is conceptual and systematic. Metaphors are essential to verbal communication because they allow people to compare and contrast more abstract ideas with more concrete ones (Kovecses, 2010).

Since metaphors are used in many different languages, their universality is called into question. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), all language users frequently employ metaphors while discussing their world. Kovecses (2010) claims that the closeness or similarity of conceptual metaphors may exist across multiple languages due to shared bodily sensations or the universality of human experience. For example, because of the connection between our parents' loving hug and the soothing physical warmth that follows it, we figuratively associate warmth with affection. Then, the conceptual metaphor AFFECTION IS WARMTH arises because of our embodied experience. This implies that some of the conceptual metaphors on the COVID-19 pandemic found in Indonesian newspapers might be the same as the ones found in other languages.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003) suggest that metaphor shapes our language, as well as our ideas, attitudes, and behaviors. People in every society develop and understand their cultural, social, personal, and embodied experiences using specific conceptual

metaphors (Kazemian & Hatamzadeh, 2022). In other words, people's organized mental models of an idea reflect the common knowledge and experiences of a particular culture.

Therefore, despite their universality, considering the number of languages in this world, the number of nonuniversal metaphors might be abundant, and "variation in metaphor appears to be just as important and common as universality" (Kovecses, 2005, p. 3). For example, many cultures, including English, Hungarian, and Chinese, conceptualize love as a JOURNEY, UNITY, HUNTING, et cetera., but in some dialects of Chinese, LOVE IS FLYING A KITE; in many cultures, anger is understood as a fluid or gas, but in Zulu, anger is perceived as OBJECTS IN THE HEART; in many cultures, life is viewed as a journey or struggle, but in Hmong, it is viewed as a STRING (Kovecses, 2005).

Despite their universality and specificity, metaphors are crucial to communication and cognition of our lives because they convey, reflect, and reinforce various ways of understanding specific parts of our life (Semino et al., 2018). They assist us in connecting the intangible experiences we have had with tangible manifestations. They underline how metaphorical connections form a significant part of our conceptual framework (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In political discourse and the media, conceptual metaphors are frequently used to refer to significant societal situations, such as crises, political issues, or diseases (Nerghe et al., 2015; Semino et al., 2018). Therefore, analyzing metaphors in news articles about the COVID-19 pandemic can reveal knowledge, conceptions, abstractions, ideologies, thoughts, and understandings that emerge in society regarding the causes of disease, challenges, and threats that society feels and faces, as well as anticipation, handling, and actions taken by all parts of the Indonesian nation, the authorities, and related parties.

Investigation of conceptual metaphors related to the COVID-19 pandemic in news media is abundant, such as done by Silaški and Đurović (2022) who analyze natural force metaphors for conceptualizing the COVID-19 pandemic in English and Serbian, Kazemian

and Hatamzadeh (2022) who investigate illness metaphors in American English and Persian, Lahlou and Rahim (2022) who study conceptual metaphors in North African French-speaking news discourse, Amaireh (2022) as well as El-Kanash and Hamdan (2023) who investigate ones in Jordanian newspaper, and Chefneux (2021) in Romanian and US newspaper articles. In the Indonesian context, studies of conceptual metaphors on the COVID-19 pandemic are very limited. The only one found is Sembiring and Surip's (2021) conceptual metaphors in two national online newspapers: *kompas.com* and *detik.com*. Since both data sources in the previous study are national newspapers, this study also included local online newspapers as the data source to see how local media conceptualize the pandemic metaphorically.

This study used Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to analyze the data. CMT was initially developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and then reinforced by Kovecses (2010). In CMT, conceptual metaphors are seen as a process of comprehending one concept or area of experience in terms of another, that is a series of correspondences between two conceptual domains, known as the source and target domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). These correspondences capture and display a coherent view from one area to another in a systematic way.

To help the readers understand what it means that a concept is a metaphor and that this concept structures our daily activities, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provide an example of the concepts ARGUMENT and the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR where the source domain is 'war' and the target domain is 'argument'. The writers claim that most of what people do in a discussion is shaped by the idea of war. Therefore, terms like 'attack', 'defense', and 'counterattack' are used.

Besides explaining the semantic-linguistic function of conceptual metaphors by identifying the target domain, source domain, and their mapping, this study also identifies the cognitive functions of the metaphors. It is based on Kovecses (2010) classification of metaphors' three cognitive functions into structural, ontological, and orientational

functions. Structural metaphors are cases where the source domain provides a relatively rich and systematic knowledge structure for the target concept. The ontological metaphor provides new abstract entities and gives a new status to the existence of abstract ideas with general categories. Orientational metaphors are based on basic human spatial orientations, such as up-down, inside-out, and center-edge.

This study specifically aims to describe how online media in Indonesian report the COVID-19 pandemic metaphorically. The research questions are: 1) What does the metaphorical concept map from the domains of origin to the target domains look like? and 2) How do online mass media journalists in Indonesian think about the COVID-19 phenomenon?

Methodology

This is a qualitative study aimed at examining conceptually metaphorical expressions. Using a qualitative approach, the research process involves interpretive analysis of human and social phenomena using non-numeric or textual data that appears in natural settings (Creswell, 2013). This approach is appropriate for describing conceptual metaphors using narratives to understand the objects in depth. The data were in the form of groups of words, clauses, or sentences containing conceptual metaphors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data sources were three newspapers in Indonesian, namely *Kompas* (K), *Jawa Pos* (JP), and *Kedaulatan Rakyat* (KR). The data were collected for one year starting from March 2020 to February 2021. To easily identify the data, a code was assigned to each datum indicating the newspaper name, the date of the news release, and the datum number.

The data were collected by using MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) formulated by Pragglejaz Group (2007). The steps in conducting MIP are:

1. Reading the entire text to get a general understanding of its content.
2. Determining the lexical units in the text.
3. Determining the meaning of each lexical unit based on the context by

considering what precedes and follows the unit.

4. Determining whether the lexical unit has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. The basic meanings tend to be more concrete – what is conveyed is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste; related to gestures; more precise; and historically older. The fundamental meaning does not always have to be the meaning most frequently used by the lexical unit in question.
5. If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, determine whether the contextual meaning is contrary to its basic meaning but can be understood by comparing the two.
6. If yes, mark the lexical unit as a conceptual metaphor.

The analysis of qualitative data is a process toward accurate description and interpretation. Miles et al. (2014) sorted out the qualitative data analysis process into three activities which include data condensation, data presentation, and drawing/verifying conclusions. Data condensation is the process of selecting and transforming raw data obtained through data collection instruments

into data ready for analysis. The data condensation process in this study was carried out by carefully and repeatedly reading texts about COVID-19, identifying the target domain and source domain, and categorizing conceptual metaphors based on their cognitive functions. Data presentation is carried out by displaying the target domain and the source domain in a table and mapping the conceptual metaphors in Bahasa Indonesia. The conceptual metaphors found are then identified for their cognitive functions and presented in a table that includes their presence in the three newspapers.

Results and Discussion

The Mapping of COVID-19 Pandemic Conceptual Metaphors

To map the conceptual metaphors used in reporting the COVID-19 pandemic, analyzing the target and source domain is needed. In each domain, by referring to Kovecses (2010), we listed the lexical items used, either explicitly or implicitly, along with their categories. For the target domain, only one category is assigned as we assume that all lexical items found refer to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

Table 1 presents the target and source domains in Indonesian newspapers.

Table 1. Target and Source Domains

No.	Target domain Category: COVID-19 pandemic as an incident	Source domain		K	JP	KR
	Lexical item	Lexical item	Category			
1	COVID-19 pandemic	war	object	√	√	√
		earthquake	disaster/power		√	√
		tsunami	disaster/power	√	√	
		fire	disaster/power			√
		colonialism	power		√	√
		economic transaction	transaction/trade			√
		competition	games/sport		√	
		journey	movement			√
2	COVID-19	enemy	human	√	√	√
		colonizer	human		√	
3	Place for treating patients	fortress	building/construction	√	√	√
4	Corona virus	animal	animal	√	√	√

No.	Target domain Category: COVID-19 pandemic as an incident	Source domain		K	JP	KR
	Lexical item	Lexical item	Category			
		radiation	power			√
		balloon	object			√
		killer	human			√
		water	object			√
		rain	object			√
		commodity	object			√
5	Regional organization	warlords	human		√	
6	COVID-19 spread	chain	object			√
7	Health workers	soldiers	human	√	√	√
8	Vaccine	armor	machine and tools	√		
		weapon	machine and tools			√
9	medicine	weapon	machine and tools	√		
10	Vaccine clinical trials	journey	time	√		√
11	Personal protective equipment / mask	armor	machine and tools	√	√	√
12	COVID-19 patients	positive & negative	movement	√	√	√
		victims	human	√	√	√
13	Number of positive cases	up & down	movement	√	√	√
		record	games/sport		√	
14	Number of recovered cases	up & down	movement		√	√
15	Number of death cases	up	movement	√	√	√
16	Affected regions	track map	transportation			√
17	Categories of affected regions	black	color	√		
		red	color		√	√
		orange	color		√	√
		yellow	color		√	√
		green	color			√
		grey	color		√	
18	Isolation	fortress	building/construction	√	√	√

The Conceptual Metaphor with The Target Domain of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesian news is likened to eight source domains, five of which are related to dangerous and unpleasant events. They are war, earthquake, tsunami, fire, and colonialism. The other source domains are economic transaction, competition, and journey.

The source domain of war and disaster implies that a pandemic is a major event, involving many parties and causing casualties. The metaphor of a pandemic which is

conceptualized as a war is found in the three newspapers under study.

- (1) *Kemunculan kasus infeksi baru di China juga memberi pandangan suram tentang betapa **sulitnya dunia dalam menaklukkan COVID-19.***

(K/14.06.2020/9)

[The emergence of new cases of infection in China also casts a bleak outlook on how **difficult the world will be in conquering COVID-19.**]

- (2) *Sebagai langkah antisipasi, Pemkot mengeluarkan kebijakan **anyar.***

*Wujudnya imbauan dari Wali Kota Surabaya Tri Rismaharini. **Seluruh OPD diminta tetap menabuh genderang perang.*** (JP/19.11.20/13)

[As a precautionary measure, the municipal government issued a new policy in the form of an appeal from the Mayor of Surabaya, Tri Rismaharini. The entire OPD was asked to **keep beating the drums of war.**]

- (3) ***Guna melawan** penyebaran virus corona, beberapa perangkat teknologi **dikerahkan.***

(KR/12.03.20/44)

[**To fight** the spread of the coronavirus, several technological devices were **deployed.**]

The lexical units '*menaklukkan*' [conquer] (1), '*menabuh genderang perang*' [beat the drums of war] (2), and *melawan* [fight] (3) used in the data are very close to the language often used to describe warfare and reinforce the semantic-conceptual relationship between the target domain and source domain.

The COVID-19 pandemic and war have been compared extensively in several studies. For instance, Kozlova (2021) investigated business news and found that during the pandemic, the world is seen as a war zone where people are combating the disease. Atuhura (2022) found that government authorities of Uganda also frequently used the metaphor of war as a rhetorical tool to explain and make understandable a growing unknown virus as a threat that should be addressed by battle conduct. While Abdel-Qader & Al-Khanji, (2022) demonstrated how American President, Joe Biden, used the metaphor of war in his speeches during the COVID-19 pandemic, similarly, Imani (2021) showed how the Iranian president used it to promote public cooperation and national solidarity in the wake of the first and second waves of the pandemic. Castro-Seixas, (2021) listed different purposes for which war metaphors were employed to help manage the health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given those varied contexts in different regions of the world, the use of warfare metaphors in the context of a pandemic might

be universal. Flusberg et al. (2018) support this by stating warfare metaphors are frequently employed in media and public discourse to describe social crises and difficult situations. The purpose of this is consistently to highlight the importance and urgency of a situation and to raise awareness of the demand for special control measures (Schnepf & Christmann, 2022).

The metaphor of a pandemic with a source domain of disaster is also found in all three newspapers.

- (4) *China Takut **Gelombang Kedua COVID-19** Meningkat, Seiring Bertambah Kasus Infeksi Baru.* (K/14.06.2020/5)

[China is afraid that the **second wave of COVID-19** will increase, along with increasing infection cases.]

- (5) *Negara-negara yang sebelumnya berhasil mengendalikan angka penularan kini harus kembali terpukul dengan **episentrum** yang kedua, bahkan ketiga.* (JP/19.11.20/33)

[Countries that previously succeeded in controlling transmission rates now have to fall back with a second, or even third, **epicenter.**]

- (6) *Pandemi corona **telah merusak ekonomi dunia, mengobarkan ketegangan geopolitik, dan mempersulit kehidupan manusia mulai dari daerah kumuh India hingga kota terbesar di Amerika, New York.*** (KR/29.09.20/39)

[The coronavirus pandemic has **ravaged** the world economy, **inflamed** geopolitical tensions and made life difficult for people from the slums of India to America's largest city, New York.]

Those data show that the lexical units in the source domain refer to two kinds of disasters, wave and fire. The word '*gelombang*' [wave] (data 4 and 5) instantiates the COVID-19 pandemic as a huge rush of water. The depiction of unexpected, abrupt, and enormous sea waves conveys the aspects of danger, adversity, and most importantly,

helplessness to control the force of water having a significant and detrimental impact on people's lives (Silaški & Đurović, 2022). Comparing the pandemic with water might also convince people that the danger of the disease quickly spreads (Amaireh, 2022). On the other hand, the words '*merusak*' [ravaged] and '*mengobarkan*' [inflamed] (data 6) represent the pandemic crisis as fire. Semino (2021) mentions several reasons why fire is an effective source domain, one of which is "Fires can spread quickly, be hard to control, and grow very large, causing large-scale and irreparable damage" (p. 54). These characteristics are shown in data number 6 to express the dangers caused by the coronavirus. The use of the natural force metaphor to conceptualize the COVID-19 pandemic has been studied by Silaški and Đurović (2022) and they argue that it is an effective instrument of communication discourse to steer public views and behavior in a desired way in a crisis because of its universality regardless the language or culture where the discourse is produced.

The Conceptual Metaphor with the Target Domain of Coronavirus

Coronavirus in Indonesian news is described variedly in seven source domains. The first three are beast, radiation, and killer, all of which can endanger safety. The other domains are water and rain, through which the coronavirus is conceptually a force. Then the other two domains are balloon and commodity.

The claim that coronavirus is a beast is found in JP and KR.

- (7) **COVID-19 harus terus dipelototi. Sebab, ia bisa jadi tiba-tiba kembali mengamuk jika warga tidak menerapkan protokol kesehatan (prokes) dengan ketat.** (JP/19.11.20/41)
[COVID-19 must continue to be watched. This is because he could suddenly return to rage if residents do not strictly implement health protocols.]

- (8) *Ghebreyesus yakin bahwa ada peluang*

*untuk bisa **menjinakkan virus corona COVID-19** lebih cepat dibanding pandemi 1918.*

(KR/22.08.20/30)

[Ghebreyesus believes that there is a chance **to tame the coronavirus** faster than the 1918 pandemic.]

The word '*mengamuk*' [rage] (7) and '*menjinakkan*' [tame] (8) imply that coronavirus is like a wild animal. Comparing the two was also conveyed by Joe Biden in his speeches. He was trying to play on people's emotions in an attempt to make people hate the virus and take precautions against it (Abdel-Qader & Al-Khanji, 2022).

The danger of the coronavirus was also conveyed by KR journalists through the choice of the 'radiation' source domain.

- (9) *Dua rumah sakit rujukan dan satu tempat isolasi bagi penderita **terpapar virus Corona** di kabupaten ini sudah penuh.* (KR/14.09.20/34)

[Two referral hospitals and one isolation place for sufferers **exposed** to the Corona virus in this district are full.]

While not all types of radiation are harmful, the word '*terpapar*' [exposed] is more commonly associated with nuclear weapons and reactors, radioactive substances, or electromagnetic waves originating from the sun, X-rays, or electronic equipment. The negative effects of exposure are usually highlighted compared to the benefits.

The Conceptual Metaphor with the Target Domain of COVID-19

The acronym COVID-19, which stands for Corona Virus Disease, with 19 representing the year the epidemic began, is compared to an enemy. All newspapers used the metaphor COVID-19 IS ENEMY, which helps readers realize that this illness is a common enemy that needs to be watched out for and fought against together.

- (10) *Kemunculan kasus infeksi baru di China juga memberi pandangan suram tentang betapa **sulitnya dunia dalam***

menaklukkan COVID-19.

(K/14.06.2020/9)

[The emergence of new cases of infection in China also casts a bleak outlook on how **difficult the world is in conquering COVID-19.**]

- (11) *Termasuk juga dengan Indonesia yang **berjuang untuk bebas** dari COVID.*

(JP/06.08.20/37)

[This includes Indonesia, which is **struggling to be free** from COVID.]

- (12) *"Presiden Jokowi Ajak Masyarakat **Berdamai dengan COVID-19.**"*

(JP/08.05.20/7)

[President Jokowi Invites People to **Make Peace** with COVID-19.]

- (13) *Dia mengatakan **pusat-pusat** pemeriksaan kesehatan harus mendapat perhatian kuat meskipun protokol **pencegahan COVID-19** diberlakukan secara ketat.*

(KR/23.07.20/41)

[He said **health examination centers** should receive strong attention even though the **COVID-19 prevention** protocol was strictly enforced.]

Those data indirectly say that coronavirus is an enemy that needs to be conquered (10) where strict 'checkpoints' are needed to prevent the enemy from entering (13). Moreover, JP metaphorized COVID-19 as a colonizer and Indonesia has to fight for its freedom (11). What sounded contradictory to the enthusiasm to fight the enemy in the early phases of the pandemic (March-June 2020) was an invitation from President Jokowi as head of state to make peace with COVID-19 (12). Probably it is because in the early phase of the pandemic, many people believed that COVID-19 was a mild disease.

Conceptualizing the coronavirus as an enemy is quite common as Musu (2020) states that "President Donald Trump has described himself as a "war-time president", fighting against an invisible enemy. Kozlova (2021) also found the same thing in business ne, where the virus is regarded as a common enemy since it is the same enemy in a lot of places or for a lot of people.

The Conceptual Metaphor with the Target Domain of COVID-19 Cases

The number of COVID-19 cases is significant to recognize since it indicates how severely the pandemic has affected a region. In the news, more attention is paid to 'active cases' or 'positive cases' and 'death rates' or 'dead cases. In the metaphor related to COVID-19 sufferers, bipolarization between ill and healthy people is present. Those infected with the virus are referred to as 'positive,' and those deemed cured are referred to as 'negative'. Victims include those who suffer and those who are close to them.

- (14) *Presiden Joko Widodo mengumumkan adanya dua orang di Indonesia yang **positif terjangkit virus corona.***

(K/02.03.20/1)

[President Joko Widodo announced that there were two people in Indonesia who were **positively infected with the coronavirus.**]

- (15) *Laki-laki (26) Kulon Progo dinyatakan **sembuh** setelah mendapat dua hasil lab **negatif.***

(KR/28.06.20/15)

[A man (26) from Kulon Progo was declared **cured** after receiving two **negative** lab results.]

- (16) *Pemerintah Kecamatan Grogol juga **memantau warga terdampak** di lingkungan **penderita positif** virus corona.*

(KR/19.04.20/46)

[The Government of Grogol Sub-District also **monitors affected residents** in the neighborhood with **positive** coronavirus sufferers.]

In the context of the pandemic, the shift from positive to negative is expected because it denotes a transition from disease to recovery. 'Positive' affects not only the sufferers but also the locals in the area where the sick person lives.

Lexical units with the meanings of up and down, high and low, peaking and sloping, or fast and slow are frequently used to describe

the development of cases. Other variations of the words used are 'rate', 'growth', 'press', and 'record'.

- (17) *"Turunkan angka kematian serendah-rendahnya. Tingkatkan angka kesembuhan setinggi-tingginya dan juga kendalikan laju pertumbuhan kasus-kasus positif baru secepat-cepatnya," ungkapnya.*
JP/27/07/20/29

[*"Reduce the death rate as low as possible. Increase the cure rate as high as possible and also **control the rate of growth of new positive cases as quickly as possible**," he said.*]

- (18) *Angka kasus sembuh dan selesai isolasi mandiri terus naik sekarang 816 kasus, tapi disisi lain kasus meninggal juga naik menjadi 53 kasus.*
(KR/27.10.20/3)

[*The number of recovered cases and completion of independent isolation continues to rise now to 816 cases, but on the other hand, the death cases have also risen to 53 cases.*]

Similar to how 'positive' has a negative or unwelcome connotation and 'negative' has a positive or expected sense, the progression of cases is also understood in reverse. Increased or high numbers of positive cases indicate trouble, and vice versa.

The Conceptual Metaphor with the Target Domain of Affected Regions

In the news, a kind of metaphor with the target domain of affected regions was found. It is AFFECTED REGIONS ARE COLOR SPECTRUM.

- (19) *Tinggal dua kecamatan saja di Sukoharjo statusnya masih **zona hijau**.*
(KR/28.06.20/18)

[*There are only two sub-districts in Sukoharjo with **green zone** status.*]

During the pandemic, the Indonesian government has implemented zoning for the COVID-19-affected areas. According to the Press, Media, and Information Bureau of the Presidential Secretariat (2020), the increase in

cases and their hazards is indicated by the four colors: red, orange, yellow, and green.

The Conceptual Metaphor with The Target Domain of Vaccine

Two metaphors comparing the target domain 'vaccine' and the source domain 'weapon' and 'suit of armor' were found.

- (20) *Sebagai informasi, PT Bio Farma menerima **pasokan vaksin** dari Sinovac sebanyak 2.400 vaksin.*
(KR/23.07.20/21)

[*For information, PT Bio Farma received **vaccine supplies** from Sinovac of 2,400 vaccines.*]

- (21) *T Nadia mengatakan, hasil uji klinis terhadap **vaksin COVID-19** menyebutkan bahwa vaksin tersebut melindungi tubuh dari gejala virus corona di level berat hingga mematikan.* (K/15.02.2021/30)

[*T Nadia said that the results of clinical trials on the **COVID-19 vaccine** stated that the vaccine protects the body from symptoms of the coronavirus at severe to lethal levels.*]

The word '*pasokan*' [supply] which often collates with the word 'weapon' illustrates that vaccine is a weapon. Meanwhile, in data 21 it is clearly stated that vaccines are body protection. Lahlou and Rahim (2022) found the same thing in North African French-speaking news where vaccines are understood as weapons to combat COVID-19 as they prepare the body's defenses to fight the infection by activating the immune system to recognize the disease and guard against re-infection.

The Conceptual Metaphor with the Target Domain of 'Others'

There are eight metaphors with the target domain 'others' and three of them were found in all the data sources. The first is PLACES FOR TREATING PATIENTS ARE FORTRESSES.

- (22) *Untuk sementara fasilitas yang digunakan 70 kamar guna keperluan*

mengkarantina orang yang berstatus PDP. (KR/29.03.20/58)

[For the time being, 70 rooms are being used for the purpose of **quarantining** people with PDP status.]

The second common metaphor in all three newspapers is HEALTH WORKERS ARE SOLDIERS.

(23) **"TENAGA kesehatan menjadi garda terdepan** untuk memberikan pertolongan kepada Penderita."

JP/10.04.20/1

[**Health workers are at the forefront** of aiding sufferers.]

Comparing health workers and soldiers are shown through the word '*garda terdepan*' [forefront]. This metaphor is a widespread term, as was also found in several studies conducted by Rajandran (2020) and Semino (2021). Musu (2020) also shows that the Governor of New Yoronce stated, "The soldiers in this fight are our health care professionals. It's the doctors, it's the nurses, it's the people who are working in the hospitals, it's the aids. They are the soldiers who are fighting this battle for us."

Considering health workers as soldiers is part of war metaphors and it has been widely used. However, because it received criticism for wrongly personifying the virus as an evil foe, inciting unwarranted concern, possibly supporting authoritarian government policies, and suggesting that those who die did not fight hard enough, Semino (2021) proposes fire as a more effective metaphor.

The third shared metaphor is PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (MASK) IS ARMOR.

(24) **Pemimpin Redaksi Jawa Pos Radar Madura (JPRM) Luqman Hakim mengungkapkan, wartawan JPRM dibekali alat pelindung diri (APD)**

dalam melaksanakan tugas jurnalistik. (JP/10.04.20/2)

[Editor in Chief of Jawa Pos Radar Madura (JPRM) Luqman Hakim revealed that JPRM journalists were provided with personal protective equipment in carrying out journalistic duties.]

(25) **Mereka wajib melakukan pencegahan penyebaran virus corona dengan tetap tinggal di rumah, jaga jarak, mencuci tangan menggunakan sabun dan wajib memakai masker.** (KR/19.04.20/49)
[They must prevent the spread of the corona virus by staying at home, keeping their distance, washing their hands with soap and **must wear a mask.**]

The Cognitive Functions of Conceptual Metaphors

The cognitive functions of metaphors can be determined by understanding the source domain, target domain, and numerous conceptual metaphors that depict the relationship between the two. Based on its cognitive function, Kovecses (2010) classifies conceptual metaphors into three groups: structural, ontological, and orientational.

The Metaphor's Structural Functions

As shown in table 2, seven metaphors with structural functions are found in the studied Indonesian newspapers, where five of them are found in all three newspapers, and two others are found only in KR and JP. A metaphor with a structural function is complex since it has other metaphors supporting it to form a certain structure and system. Structural functions allow language users to comprehend a target domain by using the structure of the source domain (Kovecses, 2010).

Table 2. Metaphor's Structural Functions

No.	Metaphor	K	JP	KR
1.	The COVID-19 pandemic is war.	√	√	√
2.	The COVID-19 pandemic is a natural disaster/destructive natural force.	√	√	√
3.	The COVID-19 pandemic is a journey.	√	√	√
4.	The number of COVID cases is movement/direction.	√	√	√
5.	Categories of affected areas are a color spectrum.	√	√	√
6.	The COVID-19 pandemic is an economic transaction.	-	-	√
7.	The COVID-19 pandemic is a competition.	-	√	-

One of the metaphors with a structural function found in this study is COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS A WAR.

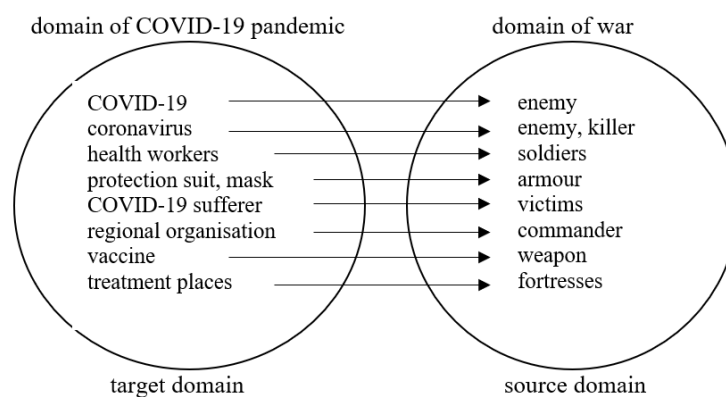
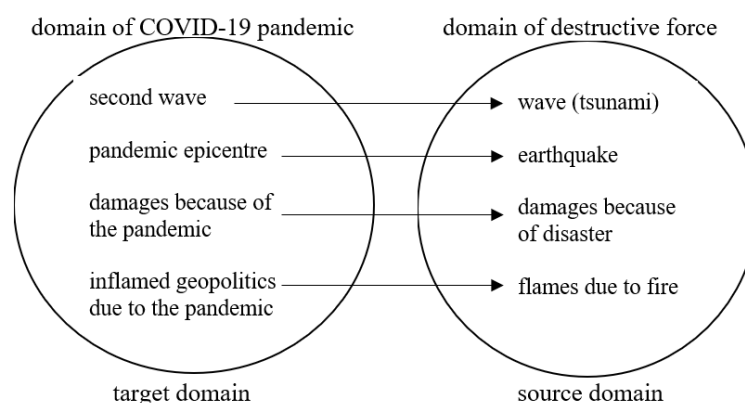
Figure 1. The mapping of metaphorical concept COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS WAR

Figure 1 illustrates the systematic relationship between the internal elements or structures in the two domains and the equivalence between the pandemic and the war. As seen by the data 1-3, 10-13, 20-21, 22, 23, and 24-25, each of these components is a conceptual metaphor used in this study.

The next metaphor that shows a structural function is COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS DESTRUCTIVE FORCE. This metaphor is built on metaphorical elements related to the type of disaster, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The mapping of metaphorical concept COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS DESTRUCTIVE FORCE

The available data mention wave (tsunami), earthquake, and fire as examples of natural disasters that Indonesians should be aware of. As shown in data 4-6, the source domains in the form of disaster categories suggest the complexity of a pandemic whose effects are extraordinary and impact various sectors of life, including the economy and socio-political dimensions.

The following information about the earthquake's epicenter adds to our understanding of how the pandemic's epicenter might expand.

- (26) **Negara-negara** yang sebelumnya berhasil mengendalikan angka penularan kini harus **kembali terpuruk dengan episentrum yang kedua, bahkan ketiga.** (JP/18.12.20/1)
[Countries that previously succeeded in controlling transmission rates now have to **fall back with a second, or even third, epicenter.**]

Datum 26 makes people recognize that the influence of a pandemic may spread to more areas. Disaster metaphors offer insight and information about the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, just like war metaphors do. The difference is, through a disaster metaphor an understanding of the origin of a pandemic is also provided through the epicenter source domain.

The use of color to zone the affected areas is another structural function. The colors red, orange, yellow, and green make up the color spectrum. The traffic lights is used in the metaphor **AFFECTED AREAS ARE COLOR SPECTRUM** with the addition of orange. The leveling of affected areas into three is deemed insufficient in the context of a pandemic, thus orange is introduced between red and yellow. By applying the analogy of a traffic light, it follows logically that zones with the highest impacts or risks are those with red, orange, then yellow zones, and zones with the lowest impacts or risks are those with green zones.

The Metaphor's Ontological Functions

Ontological metaphors are based on how people perceive and interact with physical things (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). As the name suggests, the ontological function of metaphor has to do with 'existence'. The target domain is an abstract concept or thing that is difficult to recognize, whereas the target domain is abstract (Kovecses, 2010). These metaphors have a one-to-one relationship between the target and source domains. Seven metaphors of this type were found, as presented in Table 3, and six of them are metaphors for coronavirus.

The discussion would be on the target domain of the coronavirus, which is physically invisible. It is crucial to compare it with observable physical objects to recognize the presence of such tiny viruses.

Table 3. Metaphor's Ontological Functions

No.	Metaphor	K	JP	KR
1.	Coronavirus is an animal.	-	√	√
2.	COVID-19 transmission is a chain.	-	-	√
3.	Coronavirus is radiation.	-	-	√
4.	Coronavirus is a balloon.	-	-	√
5.	Coronavirus is water.	-	-	√
6.	Coronavirus is rain.	-	-	√
7.	The affected areas are a track map.	-	-	√

Metaphors with an ontological function are less distributed in the three newspapers. Comparing the coronavirus to an animal is a common metaphor between K and JP. When viruses and wild animals are compared, the public—news readers—can consciously or

unconsciously transfer the traits of wild animals to the coronavirus.

Other metaphors are found in only one newspaper. Analogies between the virus and radiation, balloons, water, and rain help readers understand the coronavirus. The

threat posed by the virus is comparable to the threat posed by radiation; the coronavirus can blow up like a balloon; the number and power of the coronavirus are so great that they must be contained to prevent flooding and destruction; and the coronavirus is like a downpour that must be eagerly anticipated to stop. The cognitive effects of such diverse metaphors contribute to a richer comprehension of the target domain's abstract objects.

The Metaphor's Orientational Functions

Orientational metaphors construct spatial orientation because we have words to describe that orientation, which is based on physical and cultural experiences and not arbitrary

(Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Orientational metaphors are sometimes referred to as coherent metaphors by Kovecses (2010) since the target concepts are regularly or uniformly conceptualized. For instance, some conceptions have an upward orientation, whereas others have the opposite orientation and are distinguished by the opposite direction.

Regarding the orientational function, two metaphors were found in the data. The metaphor of the COVID-19 pandemic as a journey and the one related to the number of COVID-19 cases are present in all newspapers.

Table 4. Metaphor's Orientational Functions

No.	Metaphor	K	JP	KR
1.	The COVID-19 pandemic is a journey.	√	√	√
2.	The number of COVID cases is movement direction.	√	√	√

Data 14-16 show that metaphors referring to patients and the number of COVID-19 cases are shown to have an orientational role. People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and who have recovered or are free from the illness are referred to as positive and negative, which are bipolar. Although there are patterns in most of the data from orientational metaphors, not all of the patterns involve two opposed notions. For instance, flattening or slopping (not increasing or decreasing) was also found in addition to increasing and decreasing.

The positive source domain does not mean positive and vice versa. In fact, the negative source domain is positive in this study because positive means contracting COVID-19. The target domain 'up' in this study also has no positive or desired meaning, except in cured patients.

Another orientational metaphor relates pandemic to journey is shown in datum 27.

(27) *Dia memperingatkan, tetap saja tidak ada yang bisa mengetahui **masa depan pandemi COVID-19**.*

JP/23.02.21/32

[He warned that still no one can predict the future of the COVID-19 pandemic.]

Because spatial orientation refers to two places as beginning and ending points, with the potential for phases in between, this type of metaphor is also unrelated to binary opposition. This metaphor also has a structural function (see Table 2). The intersection of functions of a conceptual metaphor is possible, as Kovecses (2010) suggests.

The findings on mapping conceptual metaphors and their cognitive functions in newspapers provide an understanding that the pandemic is very precarious and dangerous. The use of metaphors in mass media helps people to conceptualize things related to the pandemic, which might be too abstract for them, more easily. Through the metaphors, the target domain whose existence is hard to perceive becomes more obvious.

Conclusion

To depict how Indonesian online newspapers narrate the COVID-19 pandemic metaphorically, this study specifically describes the mapping of conceptual metaphors related to COVID-19 and their

cognitive functions. The data of metaphorical lexical units were collected using The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) and then analyzed with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). This study found 18 target domains which were conceptually compared to more variants of source domains. The conceptual metaphors found in the news performed the three cognitive functions: structural, ontological, and orientational, all of which help readers to better understand abstract things related to the pandemic. The findings of varied source domains, many of which are the same as those found in other languages, such as English, French, and Jordanian, proves the universality and variation of metaphors (Kovecses, 2005). Many of them are universal because everyone in the world was experiencing the pandemic crisis in the same context. However, some of them are culturally specific because the way people feel and react to the pandemic is greatly influenced by their past experiences. Unfortunately, this study does not explain those cultural metaphors that are specifically Indonesian. Therefore, other researchers might conduct further studies on this topic to provide a thorough explanation of conceptual metaphors on COVID-19 in Indonesian.

Acknowledgment

The researchers feel indebted to the Faculty of Languages, Arts, and Cultures of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia, for the funding. We would also thank Lukluk Trisnawati, Zenni Syarifah, and Yoga Pangestu for helping us collect the data.

References

- Abdel-Qader, L. M., & Al-Khanji, R. R. (2022). Conceptual metaphor in COVID-19 speeches of the American president Joe Biden. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(4), 810–818. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1204.24>
- Amaireh, H. A. (2022). COVID-19 is war, water & a person: Metaphorical language of the Coronavirus disease in “the Jordan Times” newspaper. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(7), 1286–1293. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1207.06>
- Atuhura, D. (2022). The metaphor of war in political discourse on COVID-19 in Uganda. *Frontiers in communication*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.746007>
- Castro-Seixas, E. (2021). War Metaphors in Political Communication on Covid-19. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.583680>
- Chefneux, G. (2021). Metaphors in Crisis (On COVID-19 in Romanian and US Articles). *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*, 13(2), 112–129. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ausp-2021-0016>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- El-Kanash, H. H., & Hamdan, J. M. (2023). COVID-19 Conceptual Metaphors in Jordanian Political Discourse: Evidence from a Newspaper-based Corpus. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 23(1), 93–113. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2023-2301-06>
- Flusberg, S. J., Matlock, T., & Thibodeau, P. H. (2018). War metaphors in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 33(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2018.1407992>
- Imani, A. (2021). What ‘Corona War’ Metaphor Means in Iranian Political Discourse. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 21(4), 329–341. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2104-17>
- Kazemian, R., & Hatamzadeh, S. (2022). COVID-19 in English and Persian: A cognitive linguistic study of illness metaphors across languages. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 37(2), 152–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2021.1994839>
- Kemensetneg. (2023). *Pemerintah putuskan Indonesia masuki masa endemi*. Kementerian Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia. <https://setneg.go.id/baca/index/pemeri>

- ntah_putuskan_indonesia_masuki_masa_endemi
- Kovecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kovecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kozlova, T. (2021). Cognitive Metaphors of Covid-19 Pandemic in Business News. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 100, 02004. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202110002004>
- Lahlou, H., & Rahim, H. A. (2022). Conceptual metaphors in North African French-speaking news discourse about COVID-19. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(3), 589–600. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i3.35949>
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Musu, C. (2020, April 8). *War metaphors used for COVID-19 are compelling but also dangerous*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/war-metaphors-used-for-covid-19-are-compelling-but-also-dangerous-135406>
- Nerghes, A., Hellsten, I., & Groenewegen, P. (2015). A Toxic Crisis: Metaphorizing the Financial Crisis. In *International Journal of Communication* (Vol. 9). <http://ijoc.org>.
- Pragglejaz Group. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926480709336752>
- Rajandran, K. (2020). 'A Long Battle Ahead': Malaysian and Singaporean Prime Ministers employ war metaphors for COVID-19. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 20(3), 261–267. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2020-2003-15>
- Schnepf, J., & Christmann, U. (2022). "It's a war! It's a battle! It's a fight!": Do militaristic metaphors increase people's threat perceptions and support for COVID-19 policies? *International Journal of Psychology*, 57(1), 107–126. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12797>
- Sembiring, G., & Surip, M. (2021). Metafora konseptual dalam wacana COVID-19 di media massa online. *Jurnal Sasindo*, 10(2).
- Semino, E. (2021). "Not Soldiers but Firefighters"—Metaphors and Covid-19. *Health Communication*, 36(1), 50–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1844989>
- Semino, E., Demjén, Z., & Demmen, J. (2018). An integrated approach to metaphor and framing in cognition, discourse, and practice, with an application to metaphors for cancer. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(5), 625–645. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw028>
- Silaški, N., & Đurović, T. (2022). It's like being hit by a tsunami: The use of the NATURAL FORCE metaphor for conceptualising the COVID-19 pandemic in English and Serbian. *Komunikacija i Kultura Online*, 13(13), 161–179. <https://doi.org/10.18485/kkonline.2022.13.13.10>