

‘The People Were Toppled by the Fire from All Sides’: An Analysis of the Metaphorical Use of *Fire* in Jordanian Political Speeches

Ghadeer Zeyad Al Hanada

Correspondence: Ghadeer Zeyad Al Hanada, Tafila Technical University, Jordan.

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Abstract

This paper examines the metaphorical use of *fire* in political speeches in the House of Representatives of Jordan. The analysis relies on political speeches made on different occasions between 2015 and 2022. This study uses a corpus-based approach to analyse fire metaphors. The findings indicate that *fire* is used in political speeches to achieve different metaphorical purposes, both positive and negative. The positive use of *fire* includes using it as a metaphor relating to hope and optimism for a better future as well as using it to praise courageous deeds and efforts of others. The negative use of *fire* includes using it to indicate danger, the speed at which unwanted things spread, pain and distress and the urgency to take immediate action to stop danger.

Keywords: fire, metaphor, fire metaphors, political speech, corpus-based approach

1. Introduction

This study aims to contribute to the body of research that has investigated fire metaphors by providing findings about how this metaphor has been used in Jordanian political speeches, an area that has received no prior attention that this researcher is aware of. It does this by investigating the different fire metaphors that Jordanian politicians use, including either explicit references to the entity of fire (i.e. fire, fires) or references to features or functions of fire (i.e., burns, spread, heat, glow, ember). In addition, it explores the various reasons for using fire metaphors.

The study is based on transcripts in which House or Representative members are the main speakers. One of the primary responsibilities of the House members is to monitor the government's acts, and topics of these transcripts include corruption, wide-spread poverty, youth unemployment and policies concerning economic hardship. The dataset comprises 50,000 words of political speeches collected between 2015 and 2022. This research adopted a corpus-based approach by using a number of electronic search techniques to search for fire metaphors.

This paper first gives a brief background of the concept of metaphor. Secondly, it presents a review of previous research on fire metaphors. Thirdly, it provides a summary of the methodological approach adopted in the study followed by an analysis of the selected excerpts. Finally, it summarises the main findings of the study.

2. Metaphor: An Introduction

The concept of metaphor is significant across many, if not all, aspects of life. Metaphors are used in fiction, daily conversations, academic writing and political speeches, to name just a few contexts where metaphors are commonly used (Charteris-Black, 2011; Thompson, 1996).

Metaphor use has a long history and has been studied since Aristotle's time (Charteris-Black, 2014). For many years, metaphors were treated as rhetorical tools used to place emphasis on a particular idea or to add more beauty and aesthetics to an overall speech (Goatly, 1997; Saeed, 1997). However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a number of theorists rejected this widely-held belief of the use of metaphors. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Ortony (1975) and Semino (2008) concluded that metaphors are not simply figures of speech used for aesthetics, but they are also a crucial strategy commonly used to fulfil a variety of functions, like conceptualising and reacting to different social situations, emotional experiences and problems. In other words, metaphors are considered an important part of how we think and speak about our surrounding world.

The concept of metaphor has been described differently by different theorists. According to Charteris-Black (2005, p. 14) and Ricoeur (1977, p. 292), a metaphor is a linguistic strategy that results from applying a word or an expression

in a context or an environment where they should not occur. Moreover, Goately (1997), Kovecses (2010) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor as thinking and speaking about one concept by referring to another concept. While these two descriptions of metaphor are different, there are commonalities between them. For example, war and argument are completely different issues, but they share common features. In a particular discussion, the speaker should put forth credible and persuasive arguments to 'win' the listener's acceptance and support; similarly, in a war, one side needs to win by fighting strongly.

Another definition of metaphor has been provided by Citron and Goldberg (2014) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980). They maintain that metaphor is about linking an abstract concept to another, more easily comprehensible concept. According to Citron et al. (2016, p. 4), the sentence 'She is one of the brightest students' is a good example of this link: The speaker links the abstract word *intelligence* to brightness, which is a concrete, commonly-experienced thing.

In addition to the definitions of metaphor identified above, it is important to also consider the structure of metaphors, which usually involve two domains: the target domain and the source domain. The target domain refers to the concept that speakers are attempting to convey, for instance, emotional states, communication, values, politics, religion and principles. The source domain refers to the concrete topic that speakers utilise to make the target more understandable. Some examples include animals, plants, fire, natural disasters, games and food (Kovecses, 2000, 2010, 2017; Lakoff, 1993).

Importantly, the relationship between the target and source domains can be partial; it does not have to be a complete relationship. In other words, when using a specific source domain to describe the target domain, only some of the features of the source domain need to be referred to; the rest of the features can be hidden. According to Kovecses (2010, p.135), the sentence, 'The argument is a building' is a good example of this partial relationship because it indicates that an argument is strong, authentic, and persuasive just like a strong, solid, durable building. The speaker uses the source domain 'building' to highlight features related to the structure and strength of a building, while disregarding building features such as the site, architecture and interior design.

Finally, the concept of metaphor serves at least four functions. One is to help convey individuals' emotional states, thoughts, values, goals, desires and beliefs (Torlakova, 2014). It is a powerful and effective device which provides information about the emotional status of the speaker. Another function is to evoke in the addressee a particular effective reaction (Citron & Goldberg, 2014; Crawford, 2009; Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987; Musolf, 2016). Metaphor is also an important linguistic strategy to convince the hearer of a specific standpoint. That is, unlike factual reasoning, metaphorical language can function to influence and manipulate others' thoughts, attitudes and values (Charteris-Black, 2014; Ortony & Fainsilber, 1987; Ricoeur, 1977; Torlakova, 2014; Woods, 2006). A fourth function of metaphor is to enable people to recognise and comprehend unintelligible, complex or unfamiliar issues (e.g., freedom, time, affections) in terms of visible, straightforward concepts by relating them to tangible things or certain physical phenomena (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Pinker, 2008; Semino, 2008; Steuter & Wills, 2008).

3. Previous Studies About Fire Metaphors

The concept of fire is clear and known to all. *Oxford English Dictionary* (2002, p. 306) defines *fire* as 'the flames, light, and heat, and often smoke that are produced when something burns'. This definition illustrates the vivid physical and visual dimensions of fire. Indeed, a number of researchers have pointed out that this major feature can be exploited for metaphorical purposes (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2017; Semino, 2020, 2021; Thon, 2018; Wandsleb, 2021).

The metaphorical use of *fire* has been identified in previous studies mainly in the contexts of civil disorder, literary and political texts, climate change, inflation and counselling processes, with more recent literature including the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

The literature shows that no single definition of fire metaphors encompasses all interpretations of this term. Lakoff (1987) explains that *fire* is an important figurative expression because it has a direct connection with human social, emotional and physical experiences. He claims that it would be impossible to comprehend the various aspects of people's emotional experiences without the use of fire metaphors (Lakoff, 1987, p. 406). Similarly, Semino (2020, 2021) indicates that fire metaphors are common and effective tools used to break down linguistic and cultural barriers.

A number of studies have defined fire metaphors by pointing to their structural features. For example, Wagener (2017) identified the two parts of fire metaphors (the target domain and the source domain), with the source domain of course the fire. According to Wagener (2017, p. 145), the sentence 'she is on fire' is a good example of the structure of a fire metaphor. That is, 'she' is the concept depicted in the metaphor and here it is the target domain and

'on fire' is the source domain. This generally indicates that the person described has a lot of energy.

Moreover, numerous attempts have been made by many researchers to define fire metaphors by investigating the lexical features of *fire*. Charteris-Black (2017, 2021), Feng (2016), Hart (2018), Hu and Chen (2015) and Saeed (2002) all argue that fire metaphors are not restricted to aspects of ordinary fires; instead, they include a set of the characteristics and functions of fire, such as flame, burn, glow, heat, torch, fuel and ember. In the same vein, several studies have attempted to classify the lexical connotations of *fire* into three main categories: natural fire, functional fire and organic fire. Natural fire is concerned with fire as a natural process and relates to its general appearance, intensity and movement. Some examples include *burn, flame, glow, spread, and fire*. Functional fire considers the functional aspects of fire, for instance, light, heat, warmth, candle and torch. Organic fire indicates that fire is a natural process that has a beginning, a midpoint and an end. This can be indicated with words such as *kindle, spark, extinguish, ember* and *ashes* among others (Charteris-Black, 2017, pp. 138-152; Feng, 2016, p. 41). Consequently, in an attempt to investigate this concept, Archer (2022, p. 173) concludes that *fire's* related lexical terms are highly varied, self-evident and easily identified.

In addition to the lexical features identified above, there have been numerous studies interpreting the concept of fire as an entity or substance that goes through several stages in its life cycle. For instance, Charteris-Black (2017) maintains that fire moves through various stages including the cause, beginning, strength, size, substance, spread and end. According to Hart (2018, p. 4), Semino (2020, p. 3) and Skrynnikova and Astafurova (2022, p. 144), these stages of fire can be used metaphorically to describe, for instance, the seriousness and the painful or uncomfortable nature of the problem under investigation.

In the same vein, Andersson (2022), Charteris-Black (2017, 2021), Hart (2018), Hawkins (2014), Kazazi (2022), Lindmark (2017) and Torlakova (2014) indicate that the metaphor which is based on the quick spread of fire is important because it creates a living and understandable picture of how things spread. For instance, Charteris-Black (2017) used the stages of fire to explain the causes and initial stages of emotions. He implemented the metaphors *kindle, spark* and *ignite*. Moreover, Andersson (2022) and Pérez-Sobrino et al. (2022) examined the metaphors used to represent the rapid spread and uncontrollable nature of the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, Arrese and Vara-Miguel (2015), Austin and Mckinnie (2022), Du Bray et al. (2018), Hu and Chen (2015) and Torlakova (2014) analysed the fire metaphors used to indicate the fast spread of conflicts, revolutions, economic crises, inflation and the climate change threat.

While the above literature focuses on the use of fire metaphors for more negative situations, it is also important to consider the positive uses of fire metaphors. According to Abbood and Mustafa (2014), Charteris-Black (2005, 2017), Kovceses (2000) and Saric (2020), the most salient and significant feature of fire is lighting because it symbolises guidance, security, comfort and happiness. That is, it leads people in the right direction, protects people from danger and helps others to see and understand things clearly. Another positive feature of fire is that it provides hope. Charteris-Black (2004, 2005) and Kovceses (2010) indicate that the light of torches and fire is hope, which makes it possible to come up with solutions to problems or announces the end of a difficult period. Purification is also a positive aspect of fire. Torlakova (2014, p. 14) argues that fire is a symbol of purity because it gets rid of unwanted things, such as decay, dirt or filth, and gives rise to fresh growth.

The literature discussed above relates to the concept of fire as an entity that has a special appearance, set of characteristics and functions. This paper now addresses some of the rhetorical functions of fire identified in previous studies.

There have been multiple attempts to thoroughly investigate the rhetorical functions of fire. Indeed, one of the most important rhetorical functions of fire is to evoke a sense of concreteness and tangibility. Charteris-Black (2017, 2021) and Austin and McKinnie (2022) maintain that fire is an entity that is known to all and can be clearly seen and felt. Thus, when implemented in talk, it enables the hearer to live and imagine the scene in vivid details. This works to make the speaker's opinion easily comprehensible to the audience. A second function of fire metaphors is that they create a sense of vividness and liveliness. According to Austin and McKinnie (2022), Charteris-Black (2021), Hart (2018) and Kazazi (2022), a fire metaphor is an effective and significant type of metaphor because its richness, vividness, and intensity can be exploited to express a range of different ideas. Indeed, Lakoff (2008) argues that fire metaphors can be used so the addressee will form a mental picture of the scene under discussion.

The third function of fire metaphors is that they enable others to speak unspeakable words. As Charteris-Black (2017) explains, unlike literal language, fire metaphors are effective in the sense that they create visual imagery of what is on the mind of the speaker. This makes the speech interesting, entertaining and easily comprehensible. Another significant function of fire metaphors is that they convey information about a person's emotional state.

Charteris-Black (2011, 2014, 2017, 2021), Lakoff (2008) and Kovecses (2000, 2008) argue that fire metaphors are closely connected with dramatic, strong and intense affective responses. These can be either positive responses, such as love, hope and pride, or negative responses, such as anger or shame. Lakoff (2008, p. 388) provides examples to give a clear idea of how the metaphorical use of *fire* conveys particular emotions. These include ‘your insincere apology just added fuel to the fire’, ‘he was breathing fire’, and ‘she was doing a slow burn’. Fire metaphors also have the function of creating an emotional bond between the speaker and the listener by arousing in listeners particular feelings (Hart, 2018; Kowalcze-Pawlik, 2022). Finally, fire metaphors are not only used to describe emotions, but also when talking about pain and illness. Charteris-Black (2017, 2021) and Semino (2010) maintain that using fire metaphors is an effective rhetorical strategy to describe pain, illness and physical suffering by using expressions such as ‘burning pain’, ‘on fire’ and ‘bake’.

4. Methodology

4.1 Approach for This Research

The preceding section provided an overview of the main areas and principal concepts related to this study, while this section presents an overview of the methodological approach adopted. This study uses a corpus-based approach to analyse fire metaphors. A corpus consists of a range of texts, which can be of any size, based on actual interactions from everyday life (Charteris-Black, 2004). Unlike traditional approaches which rely heavily on intuition concerning the use of language, a corpus analysis uses a number of electronic search techniques. For example, computers can be used to search for specific types of information, as opposed to the researcher reading a large number of texts (Meyer, 2004). This makes the process of analysis quicker, more accurate and more reliable than materials which depend on introspection (Lindquist, 2009). Furthermore, this approach can show aspects of language that the researcher may be unaware of (Charteris- Black, 2004).

4.2 Data Collection

The data for this study consists of 10 hours of video-recorded speeches held in the House of Representatives of Jordan. The corpus consists of videos recorded between 2015 and 2022 and selected randomly from different sessions. This is an appropriate approach because the topics that are usually considered by the politicians include the hard economic conditions in the country, growing poverty, corruption, price increases and the high rates of youth unemployment. These are all recurring topics that take place in different debates. These topics are typical because the main role of the speakers is to evaluate, monitor and criticise the acts of the government.

The language of the video-recorded speeches is Standard Arabic. As there are no transcriptions available, the video-taped corpus was transcribed by the researcher with the help of the online transcription device ELAN (a linguistic annotator). This resulted in a final corpus of 50,000 words.

4.3 Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the main focus of the present study is to investigate the metaphorical use of *fire* in political speeches. Thus, to identify fire metaphors in the corpus of data, a set of Arabic words related to the concept of fire needed to be collected. These words were identified by consulting the different meanings of *fire* in the well-known Arabic dictionary *Al- Mu'jam alwaseet*.

The following meanings have been identified in the dictionary. The right-hand column contains the original Arabic meanings and the column on the left their English translation.

Table 1. The meanings of fire in Al- Mu'jam alwaseet (pp. 961-962)

A natural process that produces light and heat.	عنصرٌ طبيعيٌّ فَعَالٌ، يمثِّله النُّورُ والحرارة المحرقة
The flame that can be seen with naked eyes.	الذهب الذي يبدو للحاسة.
The burning heat.	الحرارة المحرقة.
Provocation and eruption	أوقد نارَ الحرب: أثارها وهيجها
Spread	نارَ الفِتنة؛ وقعت وانتشرت
Light, lamp, torch, glow, torch	نار نورا: أضاء، المنارة: الشمعة ذات الستراج
Leading people to the truth and the right path.	أَنورُ من ذلك: أوضَحْ وأبَيَّن، نورَ الله قلبه: هداه إلى الخير و الحق

The meanings shown in Table 1 indicate that in addition to the basic meaning of fire as a natural process that provides light, heat and warmth, its many functions and features are also included in its definition, such as its rapid

spread and dangerous nature as well as its ability to lead people to the right path. This means that to identify and understand the metaphorical use of fire requires including the associated words that relate to the functions and features of fire, such as *burn, heat, light, glow, spread, eat, smoke, etc.*

After determining the key words used to define *fire*, examples depicting and illustrating fire metaphors needed to be identified in the corpus. AntConc was the freeware and corpus analysis programme used to find and sort all lexical terms linked to conceptual fire metaphors. While AntConc has additional features and can provide information such as the overall number and frequency of words and phrases, these features are beyond the scope of this qualitative study so were not used.

Searching for fire metaphors in the corpus can be achieved through a number of strategies. According to Stefanowitsch (2006, pp. 1-6), there are five strategies that researchers use to extract metaphors from a corpus: The first strategy is to read the entire text to attempt to find all metaphors manually. The second is to try to find lexical terms that might work as a source domain. The third strategy is to seek to find target domain words. The fourth is to attempt to find sentences involving lexical terms from both the source and target domains. And the fifth strategy is to try to locate metaphors using metaphor markers.

In the present study, the researcher implemented the second strategy, locating all words and phrases relating to the source domain of fire. Table 2 below shows all the Arabic words and phrases searched for in the corpus along with their equivalent meanings in English.

Table 2. Words and phrases associated with fire

Abyss	الهاوية	Flames	ألسنة اللهب	Lamp	قنديل
Boiling	يغلي, غليان	Flaming	ملتهب	Light	ضوء
Break out	تنشب	Flared up	اشتعل	Melt	صهر, ذاب
Broke out	نشب	Flash	وميض	Oil	الزيت
Burned	احترق	Fuel	وقود	Outbreak	اندلاع, نشوب
Burning	كي, متقد, مشتعل	Fuelled	أجج	Overrun	اجتاح
Devour	تلتهم	Fuelling	تأجيج	Provocation	اثارة
Eat	أكل	Glimmer	بريق	Rage	غيظ
Effervescence	فوران	Glow	وهج	Raging	مستعر
Ember	جمر	Glowing	متوهج	Raging desire	غليل
Erupt	تثور	Heat	حرارة	Scorch	تلفح
Erupted	اندلع	Heating	تسخين	Smoke	دخان
Exploded	انفجر	Hell	جحيم, جهنم	Spark(s)	شرر, شرارة
Explosion	انفجار	Hot	ساخن, حار	Spread	بث, امتد, انتشر
Extinguish	اخماد	Ignite	اشعال	Strangle	خنق, خناق
Fever	حمى	Ignited	شعل	Swallows	يبتلع
Fire	نار, حريق	Incandescent	وهاج	Torch	شعلة
Fires	نيران, حرائق	Inflamed	يلتهب	Torched	أضرم
Fiery	ناري	Invasion	اجتياح	Warmth	الدفء
Flame	لهب, لهيب	Kindle	سعر, توقد	Wildfire	الهشيم

One hundred and fifty three examples containing fire metaphors were extracted from the corpus. To determine whether the word *fire* or related terms were used metaphorically or not, the researcher followed the metaphor identification procedure suggested by Pragglejaz Group (2007). According to this procedure, a particular lexical term can be said to be metaphorical when its literal or actual meaning differs completely from its contextual meaning (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p.3). The two examples below, taken from this study's corpus, further clarify this point:

Example 1:

I used to meet with my family at evening time and watch a black and white television. One evening, the national

television was playing a song about *Fire Mountain*.

كنت اجتمع مع اسرتي في المساء على تلفزيون ابيض و اسود وكان تلفازنا الوطني يعرض اغنية عن جبل النار.

Example 2:

This government is igniting the *fire* of hunger among all the people of the country.

وان ما تفعله هذه الحكومة هو اشعال نار الجوع بين أبناء الوطن جميعا.

In the first example, *fire* is used to signify the name of a mountain located in Palestine. Here, *fire* has not been used metaphorically, so this instance is excluded from the analysis. In the second example, *fire* literally means the natural process that provides people with light and warmth, but contextually it is being used very differently to indicate the intensity of hunger. In other words, Example 2 shows a contrast between the literal and contextual meanings of *fire*, so its use here can be considered metaphorical.

Once fire metaphors were identified in the corpus, they were then grouped into categories according to their purpose of use. Finally, the identified fire metaphors were translated into English with the help of a professional translator. In other words, the data were analysed in Arabic and subsequently translated into English.

The following section examines closely the nature of the fire metaphors identified in the data and their different uses.

5. Findings and Discussion

The fire metaphors revealed six different purposes of use, related to both negative and positive contexts. The uses identified in negative contexts were to indicate danger, to illustrate the speed at which unwanted things spread, to convey the extent of pain and distress and to emphasise the urgency of taking an action to stop danger. In positive contexts, the uses of fire metaphors were to convey a message of hope and to praise the deeds and good efforts of others. These purposes are discussed in detail below.

5.1 To Indicate Danger

The speakers used fire metaphors to indicate that there is a risk of danger when describing the following issues: the unstable conditions in the surrounding countries, the poor economic and social conditions in the country and the negative effects of these bad conditions on citizens' everyday lives. The following examples from the data corpus illustrate how fire metaphors were used to discuss the situation in the surrounding countries.

- 1- We all know that **the fire is burning** (النار مشتعلة) in Iraq, Syria, and Palestine.
- 2- **The war is raging** (الحرب مستعرة) on people of the Arab countries to destroy them.
- 3- We realise that we live in **a flaming regional environment** (محيط ملتهب).

The speakers, here, were talking about the danger in surrounding countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Palestine. The source domain in these examples revolves around the idea that the fire is still burning: '*the fire is burning*', '*the war is raging*', '*a flaming environment*'. This indicates that the situation in these countries is still more critical and dangerous. Notice that in this case, the speakers used the present continuous tense for 'burning', and 'raging' to implicitly reinforce the continuing nature of the danger.

The first example includes an explicit reference to fire: '*fire is burning*', but the second and third examples use some of the features of fire, for instance, '*the war is raging*' suggests that the war looks like a raging fire burning everything in its path.

Other examples linked the dangerous situation in these countries to the source domain of a tight and closed circle of fire:

- 4- This is an initial picture of the **ring of fire** (الحزام الناري) that we are in currently.
- 5- We live in the middle of **a flaming ring of fire** (حزام ناري مشتعل).
- 6- Our country is surrounded with **a flaming regional environment** (اقليم ملتهب) just like the bracelet that surrounds the wrist.
- 7- **The fire is stalking** (النار تترصد بحدودنا) our borders.

In examples 4 and 5 above, the speakers pointed out that the surrounding situation is similar to a ring surrounded by fire, and we are living in the middle of this ring. This metaphor use indicates how serious the current situation is. Similarly, in example 6, the speaker linked the flaming situation in the surrounding countries to the bracelet that surrounds the wrist, suggesting that the danger is near and all around.

Finally, example 7 illustrates the serious nature of the situation. The speaker suggests that the fire is not only burning around us, but is about to cross the borders and enter the country. Notice that the speaker used the verb *'stalking'* to indicate that the fire is hiding behind the borders and is waiting for the right opportunity to jump and enter.

These examples show how the speakers used fire metaphors to create the impression that the situation is very dangerous. However, as mentioned above, fire metaphors were not just used to express the danger of the circumstances in the surrounding countries, they were also used to emphasise the danger to the government caused by the difficult social and economic conditions and hard governmental policies. A number of speakers addressed the issue of public tension and anxiety as in the following example:

8- This parliamentary session started in extraordinary circumstances as **the general atmosphere is flaming** (و الأجواء العامة الملتهبة).

In this example, the speaker described the general atmosphere by using the adjective *'flaming'* to further amplify the difficulty of the whole picture.

In addition, some speakers used fire metaphors to suggest that the government is responsible for the country's challenging economic situation:

9- This decision **inflamed the prices** (ألهب الاسعار) of fuel and all goods.

10- People can not tolerate **the flames of high prices** (لهيب ارتفاع الاسعار).

11- The government's past economic policies **ignited protests** (تَشَعَل الشوارع بالتظاهر) in the streets.

12- This government is **igniting the fire of hunger** (إشعال نار الجوع) among all the people of the country.

The speakers here addressed the issues of prices, poverty and street protests by the fire metaphors *'inflamed the prices'*, *'flames of rising prices'*, *'ignited protests'*, *'igniting the fire of hunger'* to accentuate the seriousness of the overall picture. Moreover, the speakers used the active verbs *'inflamed'*, *'ignited'* and *'igniting'* to indicate that the government is accountable for these negative policies and introduced them intentionally.

Other examples show how speakers used fire metaphors to point out the negative impacts of the government policies noted above:

13- Extremism spread and **the throwaway culture ignited** (اشتعلت ثقافة الاقصاء).

14- The society was divided horizontally and vertically, and the hotbeds of violence **have exploded** (وتفجرت بئر العنف).

15- We live in a state of anticipation amid expectations that **the crisis will explode** (وانفجار الازمة).

16- The global economic crises, the high oil prices, and the competitive strength in international trade **reached a fever pitch** (وصلت الى درجة الحمى).

Here the speakers wanted the fire metaphors to show the undesirable consequences of the actions of the government: *'throwaway culture ignited'*, *'hotbeds of violence have exploded'*, *'crisis will explode'*, *'reached a fever pitch'*. Importantly, not all the examples include the word *fire*. In examples 14 and 15, speakers used the verbs *'explode'* and *'exploded'*, which refer to one of the causes of fire to indicate that *hotbeds of violence* and *crisis* have exploded and caused a fire.

Finally, the examples below indicate that the conditions as mentioned above put a lot of peoples' lives in danger:

17- The people were **toppled by the fire** (أطاحته النيران) from all sides.

18- **The fire is burning you** (النار بتحرق فيكم). And I swear by Almighty Allah that **the fire reached your clothes** (النار وصلت لأثوابكم).

19- These magic solutions **brought the people to Hell** (دفعت بالمواطن الى الهاوية).

In example 17, the speaker used the fire metaphor *'toppled by the fire'* to express the magnitude of people's suffering. Using the passive voice *'were toppled'* indicates that the people are passive recipients of the fire and cannot do anything to change the situation. Moreover, the use of the quantifier *'all'* in *'from all sides'* further intensifies the danger and severity of the fire. That is, the fire surrounded the people and left them no chance to escape or survive.

In example 18, the speaker used fire metaphors twice. First, *'fire is burning you'* draws on the fact that fire can kill to highlight danger. Then by saying *'the fire reached your clothes'*, the speaker strengthens and heightens the unfavourable nature of the conditions that people are experiencing. In addition, by using the expression *'I swear by Almighty Allah'* the speaker is attempting to appear honest and trustworthy. Lastly, in example 19, the speaker used the fire metaphor *'Hell'*, which is one of the names of the fire on Judgement Day. That is, according to the speaker,

the government's procedures threw people into the burning flames of Hell.

This section shows that the different speakers attempted to use fire metaphors in their speeches to highlight dangerous situations and their severe impacts on different aspects of life.

5.2 To Illustrate the Speed at Which Unwanted Things Spread

In addition to pointing out danger, fire metaphors were used to indicate the speed at which undesirable situations, including poverty, unemployment, corruption, crimes, nepotism and favouritism, and injustice, spread. The examples below show this use.

20- And poverty spreads like **wildfire** (كالنار في الهشيم).

21- Thousands of employees, advisers, and media professionals eat the budgets **like fire eats wood** (كما تأكل النار الحطب).

In both of these examples, the speakers indicated how widespread poverty and corruption are. In the first example, the speaker used the fire metaphor 'wildfire' to indicate that poverty spread rapidly and deeply among society. Similarly, in example 21, the speaker suggested that a large number of employees and advisors misuse public funds and property. He links this group of people with the burning fire that eats wood. This generally works to strengthen the rapid erosion of the budget funds on the one hand and the increased greediness of the corrupt members of government on the other.

The two examples above illustrate that the speakers used the entity of fire itself to indicate the spread of the problems of poverty and corruption. Other examples revealed the issue of the rapid spread by using words related to the features of fire, as shown in the following examples:

22- Crime has **spread** (انتشر) in many different ways.

23- We witnessed a large **outbreak** (تفشيا) of nepotism and favouritism, appeasement and benefits.

24- Injustice and corruption had **invaded** (اجتاح) and lived in the country.

In these examples the speakers considered the scale of crime, nepotism and favouritism, and injustice by using words relating to features of fire: 'spread', 'outbreak', 'invaded'.

There were also examples in the data corpus showing that fire can spread as something that devours and eats anything in sight:

25- The corruptors **ate the dry before the green** (أكلوا اليابس قبل الأخضر).

26- The corruptors **ate the white, the black, the dry and the green** (أكلت الابيض والاسود والاخضر واليابس).

27- Poverty and unemployment **ate and devoured** (التهم و اكل) the Jordanian citizen.

In these examples, the speakers again addressed the problems of poverty, corruption, and unemployment by implementing the fire metaphors 'ate the dry before the green', 'ate the white, the black, the dry, and the green' and 'ate and devoured'. This time, the metaphors attempted to associate the problems with the hungry flames of a fire which continues to spread, threatening and devouring everything in its way.

The examples presented in this section demonstrate that one of the metaphorical uses of fire is to illustrate the speed at which unwanted things spread, and the resulting negative outcomes.

5.3 To Convey the Extent of Pain and distress

In this study, another metaphorical use of fire was to indicate the magnitude of pain and distress witnessed by the people. The different types of pain identified in the data include the pains of hunger, injustice and poverty, heartbreak and choking, as clearly seen in the following examples:

28- The citizen is holding **the ember of hunger** (جمر الجوع).

29- This government is **igniting the fire of hunger** (اشعال نار الجوع) among all the people of the country.

In examples 28 and 29, the speakers attempted to associate the pain of hunger to fire. That is, the fire metaphor 'the fire of hunger' indicates that the pain of hunger is very similar to the pain of the burning fire. Similarly, the fire metaphor 'holding the ember of hunger' suggests that people endure the pain of hunger like the pain of holding a hot, burning ember.

Another pain revealed in the data is the pain of injustice, shown in the examples below, in which the speakers used fire metaphors to refer to the pain and cruelty of injustice:

30- **The flames of injustice** (لهيب الظلم) affected the people of my dear country.

31- We want justice for the tribes of the Badiya who are **holding embers** (القابضين على الجمر).

In these examples, the speakers attempted to associate the pain of the flaming fire to the bitterness of injustice.

The pain of heartbreak was also expressed with fire metaphors:

32- They are going to use the gas of those who **burn the hearts** (أحرق قلوب) of our mothers.

The fire metaphor in the example above revolves around the concept of burning, a feature of fire, with the burning referring to the tired, distressed and exhausted hearts and lives of mothers and the hundreds of people around us. As we know, fire has the power to burn and destroy everything in its path. Likewise here, the surrounding circumstances made people sad, heartbroken, and depressed.

Finally, the speakers used fire metaphors to refer to pain from choking, or the inability to take a breath, highlighting the feature of fire in which it uses removes oxygen and produces smoke and toxic gases that can lead to choking and ultimately death. Several of the fire metaphors explicitly refer to strangling people and preventing them from breathing, for example:

33- The citizen who is working to find his daily bread **has been strangled** (ضيقنا الخناق).

34- **They have been strangled** (ضيقنا الخناق) because in many cases the father might lose his citizenship and the son retain it.

35- The government started to **strangle** (خنق) the people.

Above, 'has been strangled', 'started to strangle', and 'strangled' are all fire metaphors that draw on fire's ability to cause death by removing oxygen and producing choking smoke and toxins that make people unable to breathe.

5.4 To Emphasise the Urgency of Taking Action to Stop Danger

Fourthly, the concept of fire was used metaphorically to indicate the urgent necessity for immediate actions to stop danger, pain or distress. These metaphors were classified under two headings: the urgent necessity to remove society's anger and the immediate action the government must take before people's patience runs out.

Examples of fire metaphors used to discuss the urgent necessity to end society's anger about difficult circumstances caused by government policies include examples 36-41:

36- The government needs to know that **the street is on fire** (الشارع يغلي).

37- Mr Prime Minister, didn't you see that **the Jordanian street is on fire** (الشارع الأردني يغلي) because of what your government did?

38- The ministers should listen to people's worries because the life outside is not a moon and spring. I swear by Allah that **the life outside is on fire** (والله الدنيا برا غليان).

39- It is the right time to make a decision because **people are heating** (الشعب عم يسخن).

40- **The explosion of the citizens' patience** (انفجار صبر المواطن) could lead to what may not be desired.

41- The hunger is chasing them, and their **patience is burning** (حار حليمها).

In examples 36-38, the speakers tried to make sure the government realised that their policies and actions caused so much anger that they must take urgent action to decrease the anger. They did this by implementing the fire metaphors 'the street is on fire', 'the Jordanian street is on fire' and 'the life outside is on fire'. The speakers here tried to link the intense conditions for the Jordanian public to the burning stages of fire to say that the situation had reached the highest burning point no more shocks would be tolerated.

Similarly, examples 39-41 evoke the inability of people to be patient enough to endure the conditions of extreme poverty. This has been achieved through the fire metaphors 'people are heating', 'explosion of citizens' 'patience' and 'their patience is burning'. These metaphors clearly indicate that Jordanians are worried and stressed and that the government needs to take the measures necessary to reduce, or eliminate, people's anger.

The next group of examples show fire metaphors used to convey an explicit threat to the government:

42- Honestly **there are fires burning us** (هنالك نيران تحرقنا) as long as we are talking about things which are outside the circle of the homeland's concerns.

43- Please, **do not ignite the fire of strife** (لا تشعلوا نار الفتنة) again. It is a red line.

44- Only God knows what we will do **when our rage ignites** (ما يفعل الغيظ فينا حينما يشتعل).

These speakers expressed the expected effects of the government's inability to provide solutions to difficult

situations. To clarify, in example 42, the speaker indicated that the government needs to listen to people's concerns which are so urgent that fire is burning: '*there are fires burning us*'. Moreover, in example 43, the speaker asked the government not to stir up troubles '*do not ignite the fire of strife*', arguing that it is a line not to be crossed ('*It is a red line*'). Finally, in example 44, the speaker tried to convey that their own anger might lead to dire consequences by saying, '*what we will do when our rage ignites*'.

The analysis above presented the fire metaphors used to express the issues of danger, the quick spread of undesirable problems, pain and distress, and the compelling need for concrete solutions for urgent current problems. However, fire metaphors also played a significant role in conveying positive thoughts and in praising courageous and good deeds of others.

5.5 Hope

The positive fire metaphors included those used to indicate hope and optimism. Some speakers indicated that the overthrow of the government carries optimism for a better future. This can clearly be seen in the following examples:

45- If we overthrow the government, **a new light will enter peoples' lives** (سيجلب النور للناس).

One of the functions of fire is to provide light to guide people on the right path; fire can also be considered a source of safety and protection. In this example, the speaker pointed out that rejecting the government's statement would provide people with '*a new light*', likely characterised by hope and optimism.

On the other hand, some speakers were hopeful that despite the serious economic hardships, the government would fulfil its duties in the near future, as shown in the following examples:

46- I am going to get rid of corruption because I can still see **a glimmer of optimism** (بريق أمل) in this government.

47- I can still see **a light at the end of the tunnel** (نورا في نهاية النفق) that this government is able to meet all the challenges.

48- The minister promised that he **will see the light soon** (سيرى النور قريبا).

In example 46, the speaker suggested that the government can solve corruption. To justify this, he used the fire metaphor '*a glimmer of optimism*', with *glimmer* referring to the light or glow of a fire, which indicates that the light is of hope. Similarly, examples 47 and 48 indicated the government's capacity to consider the economic challenges, with the speakers attempting to enhance their opinions by using the fire metaphors '*a light at the end of the tunnel*' and '*see the light soon*'. This light, according to the speakers, is full of confidence, hope and optimism for the possibility of change.

5.6 Praising

Another positive use of *fire* was for praising. In this case, the speakers used fire metaphors to indicate that despite the difficult times the country is experiencing, there are still many courageous and patient people who love their country and feel they belong to it. Consider the following examples:

49- May God protect Jordan and the Jordanians who are **holding the ember of affiliation** (القابضين على جمره الانتماء). Yes, it is the ember of affiliation.

50- Al Talibya camp residents who are **holding the ember of the loyalty** (القابضين على جمر الولاء للوطن) to the homeland and its leadership deserve the best.

51- Only God knows that **their rage burns with love and loyalty** (يشتعلون بالحب و الولاء).

52- Our country is **a warm oven** (فرن دافئ) for those whose countries left them or who emigrated from their homelands.

To begin, in examples 49 and 50, the fire metaphors '*the ember of affiliation*' and '*the ember of the loyalty*' are employed to denote people's affiliation to their country. That is, despite the spread of poverty, injustice and unemployment, everyone loves the homeland and is proud to be a part of it. Example 51 involves the same idea, with the use of the fire metaphor '*burn with love and loyalty*', which indicates that people are full of patriotism, belonging and loyalty. Moreover, in example 52, the speaker expressed his deep love and absolute loyalty for the homeland by referring to it with the fire metaphor '*warm oven*'. Giving warmth is one of the functions of fire. Thus, the speaker attempted to convey the idea that the homeland is a warm and safe place for everyone, including immigrants and refugees.

In addition to expressing patriotism and loyalty, fire metaphors were used to indicate that people are persistent and patient despite the difficult conditions, as shown in the following examples:

53- We spent the night **on the ember** (على الجمر).

54- Today, we are in front of the martyrdom of a Jordanian hero whose **patience defeated the fire** (انتصر صبره على النار).

55- The courageous people are **suppressing their burning anger** (الكاظمين الغيظ).

In example 53, the speaker implemented the fire metaphor '*spends the night on ember*' to denote the magnitude of people's patience and endurance by comparing it to spending the whole night sleeping on embers. Similarly, in examples 54 and 55, the fire metaphors '*patience defeated the fire*' and '*suppressing their burning anger*' indicate that people have enough patience to defeat burning fires.

Finally, several speakers attempted to use fire metaphors to praise the wise and courageous men in their homeland as the examples below indicate:

56- The people of Al- Karak **ignited the first Arab revolution** (أشعل اول ثورة عربية) against injustice and oppression.

57- Wasfi Al Tal was not a regional, categorical, terrified, and scared but he was brave, and **his eyes were glowing** (في عينيه الوهج) with Palestine.

58- The blood of the righteous martyrs are **torches of light and truth** (مشاعل حق و نور) that can't be challenged or falsified.

Firstly, in example 56, the speaker used the fire metaphor '*ignited the revolution*' to refer to the brave, courageous and fearless people who revolted against injustice and oppression. Similarly, in example 57, the speaker referred to one of the courageous people by implementing the fire metaphor '*his eyes were glowing*' to indicate that he is brave and determined. Finally, in example 58, the speaker tried to praise the martyrs who paid with their lives to make Jordan a safe country. He used the fire metaphor '*torches of light*', indicating that the martyrs' blood will light the way at night and guide people in the right direction.

6. Conclusion

The word *fire* does not just represent burning flames that provide people with light, warmth and heat; it is also an important medium to perform different rhetorical functions. Therefore, in this paper, the researcher attempted to go beyond the simple reading of words to search for the metaphorical meanings of *fire* in political speeches in Jordan.

The findings show that the political speakers used several fire metaphors in their speeches. Some metaphors involved words that made an explicit reference to fire such as: fire, fires and torch, while others were about the features and functions of fire. The features include, for instance, ignite, burn, flames, devour, explode and ember. The functions include the warmth, glimmer and the light of fire among others.

The paper shows that speakers attempted to employ fire metaphors in their speeches to achieve different purposes. These carry either positive or negative meanings. To begin, fire metaphors highlight risk or danger. To elaborate, the excerpts identified in the data pointed out the unstable situation in the surrounding countries, the challenging economic conditions in the country and the impact of these conditions on citizens. All these issues, in turn, suggest something serious or dangerous. Among the fire metaphors implemented to indicate danger are the following: '*burning, raging, igniting, flaming, ring of fire, flames, inflamed, fever and hell*'. Secondly, fire metaphors emphasise how wide-ranging the problems of poverty, unemployment and corruption are. Similarly here, speakers used the following fire metaphors: '*wildfire, fire that eats wood, invaded and outbreak*' to mention but a few.

Thirdly, fire metaphors point out the pain and distress experienced by the majority of citizens. Some examples include '*ember of hunger, fire of hunger, flames of injustice, burn the hearts and holding embers*' among others. Fourthly, fire indicates the urgent need to take decisions to improve living conditions in the country. The excerpts identified in the data clearly indicate people's inability to tolerate the difficult circumstances. For instance, the speaker used the following fire metaphors: '*the street is on fire, people are heating and our patience is burning*' among others.

Hope, optimism and praising the courageous efforts of others are other aspects of fire metaphors. Unlike the uses identified above, these aspects involve positive features. For instance, some speakers used fire metaphors to indicate that the future will be better. Some examples to demonstrate this include '*a new light, glimmer of optimism and a light at the end of the tunnel*'. Similarly, other speakers employed fire metaphors to praise the courageous people who love their country despite the hard circumstances. For instance, '*the ember of affiliation, the ember of loyalty and burn with love and loyalty*' to mention but a few.

This study confirms several observations from previous research and adds further to the discipline's understanding of how fire metaphors are exploited for a variety of purposes within the context of Jordanian political speeches, an area

that has received little attention until now. Moreover, unlike previous studies investigating fire metaphors, this study relied solely on Arabic political speeches in an Arabic context, which may provide readers insights on how the use of fire metaphors works to reflect a culturally-specific way of expressing thoughts and traditions.

Finally, the findings from the current study can be further developed by comparing them with the metaphorical aspects of *fire* in other types of political discourse or other speech events, such as daily conversations or religious speeches, in an attempt to determine how significant fire metaphors are in different contexts, and to see whether there are similarities or differences in how fire metaphors are used.

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