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Conceptualizing Student Protest: An Analysis of Fire Metaphors in Al Jazeera Arabic's Discourse in Pro-Palestine Movements at Western Universities

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ABSTRACT

Background: Following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, Israel's military attacks on Palestine have become increasingly brutal, sparking massive protests by students at Western universities. Al Jazeera plays a significant role in shaping public perception of this discourse. In its reporting, Al Jazeera frequently uses metaphors. The fire metaphor is among the most effective and is often used in various contexts.

Aims: This research aims to examine the conceptual metaphor of fire in Al Jazeera Arabic's discourse on pro-Palestinian student protests at western universities and reveal its ideological functions.

Methods: This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, with analysis grounded in conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The data source was pro-Palestinian student protest discourse on Al Jazeera Arabic. Data analysis uses the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) by the Pragglejaz Group.

Results: These findings reveal that Al Jazeera Arabic uses lexemes related to fire to conceptualize and frame pro-Palestinian student protests at Western universities. Among the thirteen lexemes found, *ʔimtadda* 'spread' (19 data), *ʔintašara* 'spread' (12 data), and *šarārah* 'spark' (12 data) appear most frequently to highlight the rapid escalation of the protest movement and its massive impact. The metaphorical mapping of all the lexemes found constructs the conceptual metaphor PROTEST IS FIRE, highlighting student action as a significant and impactful force like fire.

Implications: The significance of this research lies in its contribution to expanding the understanding of how the fire metaphors is not only a linguistic feature but also a cognitive and ideological device for shaping public perceptions of pro-Palestinian protests.

Keywords: *Al Jazeera Arabic; conceptual metaphor; fire metaphors; pro-Palestine student protest*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The *Thufanul Aqsa* operation launched by Hamas on October 7, 2023, marked a significant turning point in the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hamas spokesman Khaled Qadomi said that this military operation was a form of resistance to the suffering of the Palestinians due to decades of Israeli blockade and occupation (Al Jazeera, 2023). According to official Israeli statistics, 1,200 people, most of whom were civilians, were killed in the operation, and about 250 people were captured as Hamas prisoners (Maghoumi, 2024; Rasanah, 2023). These figures show a significant difference from the casualties caused by Israel's retaliatory attacks. As of November 12, 2025, the Gaza Ministry of Health reported that the death toll in Palestine had reached 69,185, 170,698 injured, and several victims were still missing under the rubble (OCHA, 2025). The high number of casualties and the scale of destruction caused by Israel's brutal attacks have reached a point that can be defined as genocide under the 1948 United Nations (UN) Convention (Bouranova, 2024; Salmiya, 2024; Verdeja, 2025).

Israel's brutal military attacks since the Al-Aqsa Flood have brought Palestine to the center of international attention. The world has made clear its support for Palestine with the emergence of various solidarity movements, such as the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement and massive demonstrations calling for an immediate ceasefire (Abbas et al., 2025). In academic circles, protests began at Columbia University in New York on April 17, 2024. This student movement was not without interference from security forces who intimidated, brutally treated, and arrested students. This further triggered the spread of pro-Palestinian protests to more than 100 universities in the US and 20 other universities outside the US (Deeb & Winegar, 2024; Mueller, 2025; Students 4 Gaza, 2024). The protesting students organized sit-ins and a campout. During these actions, they called for a permanent ceasefire, demanded universities divest from companies with ties to Israel, sever academic collaboration with Israeli institutions, and grant amnesty to students and faculty members who had been arrested and prosecuted for participating in the protests (Al Jazeera, 2024; Bayeh & Riemer, 2024; Cabral & Faguy, 2024; Reuters, 2024).

This movement have been in the spotlight and widely covered in the international media. The media plays an essential role in shaping public image and opinion on various issues (Yuhandra et al., 2024). As the main channel for disseminating information, the media not only conveys facts but also reconstructs reality. This means that the media frames events and narrates them in accordance with its own ideology to influence public perception (Hutagalung & Nurhasanah, 2025; Muthaqqin et al., 2021). Thus, Al Jazeera, as a media outlet with credibility and global reach, plays a significant role in shaping public perception of various issues, including these pro-Palestinian protests by Western students.

One way the media shapes public perception is by selecting linguistic features. The media often uses figurative language, such as metaphor (Altalihin et al., 2025; Komatsubara, 2024; Tay, 2020). This is because metaphors are effective persuasive strategies for evoking certain emotional responses from recipients (Charteris-Black,

2004). Van Dijk (2011) emphasizes the essential role of rhetorical strategies, including metaphors, in conveying messages, describing the complexity of emotions, and constructing narratives appropriate for the public.

In traditional linguistics, metaphors are seen as a rhetorical device to make language more beautiful. Then, in contemporary linguistics, the view of metaphors has been expanded to include the idea that metaphors are a fundamental part of the human cognitive system in understanding and talking about the world around us, not just a figure of speech (Fathurrohimi et al., 2025a).

The understanding of metaphor as part of human cognition was first developed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), known as conceptual metaphor theory, and is one of the pillars of cognitive semantics. According to this theory, conceptual metaphor is a way of understanding an abstract concept by using terms from more concrete concepts or experiences (Ilham & Tajudin, 2022). This definition also indicates that there are three main components in conceptual metaphors, namely the source domain (concrete concept), the target domain (abstract concept), and the conceptual mapping between the two. In Arabic linguistics and rhetoric studies, metaphors are equated with *isti'arah* because basically both work by borrowing another concept to understand an abstract concept (Aljarah, 2022; Fathurrohimi et al., 2025b).

One metaphor often used across many discourses is the fire metaphor because the concept of fire is clear and widely known (Al Hanada, 2023; Luo, 2023). Charteris-Black (2016) has highlighted the physical dimensions and properties of fire as one of the concepts that can be used for metaphorical purposes. Lakoff (1987) explains that fire is a crucial figurative expression because it directly relates to human social, emotional, and physical experiences. He asserts that it is impossible to understand various aspects of human emotional experience without using the metaphor of fire. Semino (2021) shows that fire metaphor is an effective linguistic strategy for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, so it is often used in various discursive contexts.

1.1 Research Gap and Novelty

Research on metaphors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in various contexts has been conducted. Maalej & Zibin (2025) analyzed how the metaphor "HUMANS ARE ANIMALS" was used by Israeli officials and supporters as a strategy to justify violence and discredit Palestinians. Furthermore, research by Fathurrohimi et al. on building metaphors (2025a) and war metaphors (2025b) in Al Jazeera Arabic's discourse on the boycott of Israel employs conceptual and critical metaphor analysis. The results of both studies show that all lexemes in the domains of war and building frame the boycott positively. Through these metaphors, Al Jazeera demonstrates an ideology of resistance that also shows its support for Palestine.

Several studies on the fire metaphors have been conducted previously across political, economic, literary, and health discourses. For example, Semino (2021) analyzed metaphors in a German news corpus on Covid-19. The results showed that fire metaphors dominated to frame the pandemic as a crisis. In the political context, Al Hanada (2023) analyzed fire metaphors in Jordanian political speeches. The results showed that fire metaphors were used to express two opposing concepts, namely hope and danger. As for the context of pro-Palestinian student protests at Western universities, linguistic research has been conducted, but it uses a critical discourse analysis approach and focuses specifically on protests in the US (Abbas et al., 2025).

While there have been previous studies analyzing the use of conceptual metaphors in discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, research focusing on the conceptualization of fire metaphors in Arab media representations of pro-Palestinian protest movements, particularly student movements in the West, remains very limited. In particular,

discourse related to student protests at Western universities has been under-explored from a cognitive semantic perspective. Based on this, this study will analyze the use of fire metaphors in Al Jazeera Arabic's discourse on pro-Palestinian student protests at Western universities using a cognitive semantic approach to reveal their conceptual mapping and ideological function.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the research background described above, the research question can be formulated as follows: How does the fire metaphor constructs the conceptualization of pro-Palestinian student protests, and how does this metaphor function ideologically in Al Jazeera Arabic's media discourse?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study is qualitative discourse analysis. Qualitative methods were used because the data analyzed was verbal data, namely metaphorical data (Nur, 2019). Based on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (2003), this analysis identifies metaphorical expressions in the discourse and reconstructs the underlying conceptual mapping between the source domain and the target domain. This approach allows for an in-depth interpretation of how metaphors shape meaning in discourse.

2.2 Research Objects

The object of this study is the conceptual metaphor of fire in Al Jazeera Arabic's discourse on pro-Palestinian student protests at western universities. Al Jazeera Arabic was chosen based on its popularity and representation. Based in the Middle East, Al Jazeera has global credibility and reach. This media consistently makes Palestine-related issues the main agenda of its news coverage (El Damanhoury et al., 2025; Fathurrohman et al., 2025b; Gathara, 2024; Satti, 2020).

The data consist of news reports published between April and May 2024, a period marked the beginning and peak of large-scale pro-Palestinian student demonstrations at western universities, resulting in increased news coverage during these two months.

2.3 Research Procedures

The research procedure began with data collection, conducted in several stages. First, the researcher accessed the Al Jazeera Arabic online news page (<https://www.aljazeera.net/>) to collect data sources. The researcher used a combination of keywords احتجاج /*ʔiḥtijāj*/ 'protest', حراك طلابي /*ḥarāku ʔ-ṭullābiyy*/ 'student movement', جامعة /*jāmiʕah*/ 'university', أوروبا /*ʔūrūbbā*/ 'Europe', and الولايات المتحدة /*al-wilāyāt ʔ-muttaḥidah*/ 'United States'. The total number of news articles collected was 48, which the researchers then copied in their entirety. The data collection technique was the observation and note-taking method, which involved observing and recording data relevant to the research objectives (Nur, 2019). The researcher observed the previously collected news discourse to identify the use of fire metaphors. Every sentence containing conceptual metaphor data related to fire was marked and noted for analysis.

Each data in this research was coded to facilitate tracking and maintain clarity of data sources. The code (AJ 04/27/2024), for example, indicates that the data was taken from Al Jazeera Arabic (AJ), followed by the publication date (04/27/24). This coding system was used consistently to mark all data quotes analysed. To identify fire metaphors in

the data source, a series of words associated with fire was collected by referring to the various meanings of fire in the Al-Ma'any dictionary.

2.4 Research Instruments

Researchers acted as the main instruments in this research. Data were collected using documentation techniques, namely by collecting and analyzing data relevant to the research focus in documents.

2.5 Data Analysis

In the data analysis stage, researchers used the referential matching method to identify conceptual metaphors. The primary tool of this method is a reference outside the language (Nur, 2019). This aims to identify the source domain and target domain in metaphor data. The data were analyzed in two stages. In the first stage, data was identified using the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) to determine whether certain words were used metaphorically or not in a discourse (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). In this research, MIP was carried out by referring to the Al-Ma'any (Arabic-Arabic) digital dictionary (<https://www.almaany.com/>). Al-Ma'any dictionary contains a compilation of modern and traditional Arabic dictionaries, including *muṣjam ar-rāʿid*, *lisān al-ʿarab*, *muṣjam al-luġah al-ʿarabiyyah al-muṣaṣirah*, *al-muṣjam al-wasiṭ*, *al-ġani*, *al-qamūs al-muḥit*, and *muṣjam mukhtār aṣ-ṣiḥāḥ*. In the second stage, the researcher interpreted the metaphors based on CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). This stage involved identifying metaphor data, mapping the source domain to the target domain, and describing the context of its use.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

This study examines the construction of fire metaphors in Al Jazeera Arabic's discourse on pro-Palestinian student movements in western universities. The analysis identifies the source domain of fire and its conceptual mapping onto the target domain of student protest movements. It further explores how these metaphorical constructions function ideologically in shaping the representation of the student demonstrations within the news discourse.

The Source Domain of Fire Metaphors

After identifying fire metaphor data using the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) by Pragglejaz in 48 news discourses collected, the researcher found 64 metaphorical data, divided into 13 fire lexemes. The frequency and percentage of these fire lexemes are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Frequency of Fire Lexemes in Al Jazeera Arabic's pro-Palestinian student protests at Western University Discourse

Fire Lexemes	Translation	Frequency	Percentage
ṣarārah	Spark	12	19%
ʔintašara	Spread	11	17%
ʔimtadda	Spread	19	30%
ʔašʕala	Ignited	6	9%
ʔindalaʕa	Erupted	5	8%
ʔajjaja / taʔajjaja	Fuelled	2	3%

ʔixmād	Extinguish	2	3%
qādiḥ	Lighter	2	3%
dirām	Flame/Blaze	1	2%
zinād	Ignition	1	2%
ḡalayān	Boiling	1	2%
sāxinah	Hot	1	2%
šūḡlah	Flame	1	2%
		64	100%

The results of the identification show that the lexeme most frequently associated with the concept of fire is the lexeme /ʔimtadda/ 'spread' and its derivatives, with a total of 19 data. In contrast, the five fire lexemes found, namely /dirām/'flame', /zinād/'ignition', /ḡalayān/'boiling', /sāxinah/'hot', and /šūḡlah/'flame', showed the lowest frequency with a total of one data point each.

Lexeme شرارة /šarārah/'spark'

Datum (1)

...كان لذات الجامعة تأثير في مظاهرات طلابها على مجريات الحرب الأميركية على فيتنام، وكانت هي أولى الجامعات إطلاقاً لشرارة المظاهرات.

/...kāna li-ḡāti 'l-jāmiʕati taʔθīrun fī muḡāharāti ṭullābihā ḡalā majrīyāti 'l-ḡarbi 'l-ʔamrikiyyati ḡalā fitnām, wa kānat hiya ʔulā 'l-jāmiʕati ʔiṭlāqan li-šarārat 'l-muḡāharāti/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

...The university itself had an impact on its students' demonstrations against the US war in Vietnam, and it was the first university to **spark** demonstrations.

Datum (2)

شكلت الاعتقالات الجماعية لأكثر من 100 شخص في حرم جامعة كولومبيا شرارة احتجاجات مؤيدة للفلسطينيين امتدت إلى حرم العديد من الجامعات في مناطق مختلفة بالولايات المتحدة بل والعالم.

/šakkalat al-ʔiḡtiqālātu al-jamāʕiyātu li-ʔakḡari min miʔati šaxšin fī ḡarami jāmiʕati kūlūmbiyā šarārat ʔiḡtijājātīn muʔayyidatin lil-filistīniyyīn ʔimtaddat ʔilā ḡarami 'l-ḡadīdi min 'l-jāmiʕati fī manāṭiq muxtalifah bi 'l-wilāyāti 'l-muttaḡidati bal wa 'l-ḡālam/ (AJ 28/04/2024)

The mass arrests of more than 100 people on the Columbia University campus **sparked** pro-Palestinian protests that spread to many university campuses across the United States and around the world.

The first lexeme discovered by researchers was /šarārah/ 'spark'. Literally, /šarārah/ is a small particle that glows and flies from fire. Referring to that definition, it is clear that this lexeme belongs to the fire domain, as the lexeme šarārah is found in the muḡjam al-ḡanī collocated with the lexeme /nār/ to form the phrase شرارة النار /šarārah an-nār/ 'spark'.

If the lexeme in data (1) is interpreted literally, then we will not find actual sparks arising from fire or something burning. The lexeme /šarārah/ in data (1) and (2) functions metaphorically to signify the beginning of protests. The pro-Palestinian protests that began at Columbia University and the police intervention against them were mapped as sparks that ignited the spirit of students at other universities to carry out similar protests.

This conceptual mapping shows a clear relationship between the source domain (fire) and the target domain (protests). The pro-Palestinian protests that occurred at many universities in the West are understood as a growing fire that started from a small spark. This mapping then gives rise to the conceptual metaphor PROTESTS ARE FIRE. Both fire and protests are concepts or events that can grow.

Lexeme انتشار */ʔintašara/* and امتدّ */ʔimtadda/* 'spread'

Datum (3)

وقد أثار انتشار الحركة المناصرة لغزة حفيظة المنظمات والشخصيات الداعمة لإسرائيل.

/wa-qad ʔaθāra ʔintišāru 'l-ḥarakati 'l-munāširah li-ǧazzah ḥafīzata 'l-munazzamāt wa 'š-šakḥiyyāt 'd-dāʕimah li-ʔisrāʔil/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

The **spread** of the pro-Gaza movement has provoked the ire of organizations and figures that support Israel.

Datum (4)

وهزت الاحتجاجات الجماهيرية عددا من الجامعات في الولايات المتحدة، حيث بدأت في 18 أبريل/نيسان الجاري من جامعة كولومبيا، قبل أن تنتشر بسرعة إلى مؤسسات أخرى

/wa hazzat 'l-ʔiḥtijājātu 'l-jamāhīriyyatu ʕadadan min 'l-jāmiʕāti fī 'l-wilāyāti 'l-muttaḥidati, ḥayḡu badaʕat fī 18 ʔabrīl/nīsān 'l-jārī min jāmiʕāti kūlūmbiyā, qabla ʔan tantašira bi-surʕatin ʔilā muʕassasātīn uxrā/ (AJ 24/04/2024)

Mass protests have shaken a number of universities in the US, beginning on April 18 at Columbia University before quickly **spreading** to other institutions

Datum (5)

ويطالب الحراك الطلابي الذي امتد لعشرات الجامعات بوقف الحرب على غزة والمقاطعة الاقتصادية والأكاديمية لإسرائيل.

/wa yuṭālibu 'l-ḥarāku 'ṭ-ṭullābīyu 'l-laḏī ʔimtadda li-ʕašarāti 'l-jāmiʕāti bi-waqfi 'l-ḥarbi ʕalā ǧazzah wa 'l-muqāṭaʕati 'l-ʔiqtišādiyyati wa 'l-ʔakādīmiyyati li-ʔisrāʔil/ (AJ 01/05/2024)

The student movement, which has **spread** to dozens of universities, is demanding an end to the war on Gaza and an economic and academic boycott of Israel

The lexemes */ʔintašara/* and */ʔimtadda/* in the above data also have metaphorical meanings. Both lexemes are found in the data sources in various derivative forms, including past tense verbs (data 5), non-past tense verbs (data 4), and nouns (data 3). Referring to the Al-Ma'any dictionary, the lexemes */ʔintašara/* and */ʔimtadda/* are synonymous, with their basic meaning: انبسط */ʔinbasaṭa/* 'to spread out'. Although commonly used in various contexts, these lexemes are often used in the context of fire. The situation where a fire grows larger and burns the surrounding area is commonly described using these two lexemes. This can be seen in the example sentences found in the Al-Ma'any dictionary, namely انتشار الحريق في المبنى */ʔintašara 'l-ḥarīqu fī 'l-mabnā/* and امتدّ الحريق إلى البيت المجاور */ʔimtadda 'l-ḥarīqu ʔilā 'l-bayti 'l-mujāwir/* 'The fire spread to the neighboring house'.

Contextually, the lexemes */ʔintašara/* and */ʔimtadda/* in data (3), (4), (5) do not refer to the physical spread of fire, but rather to the spread of pro-Palestinian protests to various universities throughout Europe, the US, and even the world. These two lexemes describe the growth and spread of the protest movement as a fire that spreads rapidly from one location to another, capturing its intensity and magnitude. This contextual meaning can be understood through the basic meaning attached to the more concrete concept of the spread of fire, so that the lexemes */ʔintašara/* and */ʔimtadda/* here belong to a metaphorical unit.

Lexeme أشعل */ʔašʕala/* 'ignited'

Datum (6)

وأشعل طلاب جامعة كولومبيا في مانهاتن شرارة الانتفاضة، حين اعتصموا في حرم الجامعة، ونصبوا "مخيم التضامن مع غزة" في يوم 17 أبريل

/wa-ašʕala ʔullābu jāmiʕati kūlūmbiyā fī mānhātn šarārata 'l-ʔintifāḍah, hīna ʕ-ʕtaṣamū fī ḥarami 'l-jāmiʕati, wa naṣabū "muxayyama 't-taḍāmuni maʕa ǧazzah" fī yawm 17 ʔabrīl/

Columbia University students in Manhattan **ignited** the uprising when they staged a sit-in on campus and set up a "Gaza Solidarity Camp" on April 17

The use of the lexeme */ʔašʕala/* in data (6) functions as a metaphorical expression. Literally, */ʔašʕala/* refers to the act of lighting a fire, as in the sentence *أشعل النَّارَ فِي الْحَطَبِ /ašʕala 'n-nāra fī 'l-ḥaṭab/* 'he lit a fire in the firewood'. However, in the context of the news above, we cannot find anyone lighting a fire; instead, we see the initiation of a sit-in and a pro-Palestinian protest.

By comparing the contextual meaning and the basic meaning, it is clear that the lexeme */ʔašʕala/* retains its core meaning of triggering a reaction (a fire), but this reaction now occurs in the context of protest, rather than in the context of fire. The lexeme */ʔašʕala/* describes the emergence of awareness, solidarity, and resistance among students in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Lexeme اندلع */ʔindalaʕa/* 'erupted'

Datum (7)

اندلعت الشرارة الأولى لتلك الاحتجاجات من جامعة كولومبيا، عندما بدأ طلاب مؤيدون للقضية الفلسطينية... احتجاجا على استثمارات جامعتهم في شركات تدعم الاحتلال الإسرائيلي والإبادة الجماعية

/ʔindalaʕati 'š-šarāratu 'l-ʔūlā li-tilka 'l-ʔiḥtijājāti min jāmiʕati kūlūmbiyā, ʕindamā badaʔa ʔullābun muʔayyidūna lil-qaḍiyyati 'l-filasṭīniyyati...ʔiḥtijājan ʕalā 's-stiḥmārāti jāmiʕatihim fī šarikātin tadʕamu 'l-ʔiḥtilāla 'l-ʔisrāʔiliyy wa 'l-ʔibādah al-jamāʕiyyah/

The first spark of these protests was **erupted** at Columbia University, when pro-Palestinian students began protesting against their university's investments in companies that support the Israeli occupation and genocide.

In data (7), the lexeme */ʔindalaʕa/* is identified as a metaphorical unit. Referring to the Al-Ma'any dictionary, this lexeme is basically defined as a sudden explosion of fire, as in the sentence *اندلعت النَّارُ فِي بئرِ بترولٍ سَبَّتْ فجأةً وانتشرَ لهبُها /ʔindalaʕat 'n-nāru fī biʔri bitrūlin šabbat fajʔatan wa ʔintašara lahabuhā/* 'A fire broke out in an oil well suddenly and spread'. Thus, in its basic usage, this lexeme indicates the rapid emergence and spread of fire, emphasizing suddenness and uncontrollability.

However, in the context of protest discourse, the lexeme */ʔindalaʕa/* does not describe an actual fire. This lexeme is used to liken the release of explosive fire energy to the surge of intense protest actions since *Thufanul Aqsha*. By comparing the contextual meaning and the basic meaning, it becomes clear that the lexeme retains its basic idea of a sudden explosion, but its meaning is metaphorically expanded into the domain of protest, an explosion or uprising of human solidarity.

Lexeme تأجج /أجج / */ʔajjaja / taʔajjaja/* 'fueled'

Datum (8)

لم يكن التضامن مع غزة فحسب هو ما أجج حركة الاحتجاجات في الجامعات الأميركية، بل كان اعتقال الطلبة في جامعة كولومبيا
/lam yakun 't-taḍāmuni maʕa ǧazzah fa-ḥasbu huwa mā ʔajjaja ḥarakat 'l-ʔiḥtijājāti fī 'l-jāmiʕati 'l-ʔamrīkiyah, bal kāna ʕ-ʕtiqālu 'ṭ-ṭalbah fī jāmiʕati kūlūmbiyā/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

It was not only solidarity with Gaza that **fueled** the protest movement on American campuses, but also the arrest of students at Columbia University
Datum (9)

تدخل الشرطة وتأجج الاحتجاجات

/tadaxxulu 'š-šurṭati wa taʔajjuju 'l-ʔihtijājāt/ (AJ 03/05/2024)
Police intervention and **fueling** of protests

In data (8) and (9) above, the lexemes */ʔajjaja/* and */taʔajjuju/* (deverbative nouns of the verb *taʔajjaja*) are both identified as metaphorical units. Lexically, these lexemes refer to the activity of lighting or kindling a fire, as in the sentence *أَجَّجْتُ النَّارَ /ʔajjajtu 'n-nār/* 'I lit the fire'. Thus, these lexemes inherently belong to the domain of fire.

However, in the context of the news above, this lexeme does not refer to the literal act of burning or lighting a fire. Instead, it describes the escalation of protests and public anger triggered by political and humanitarian events, specifically Israel's blockade of Gaza and the arrest of Columbia University students and police intervention on campuses during pro-Palestinian protests. The expressions *أَجَّجَ حَرَكَةَ الْإِحْتِجَاجَاتِ /ʔajjaja ḥarakat 'l-ʔihtijājāti/* 'sparked the protest movement' and *تَأَجَّجَ الْإِحْتِجَاجَاتِ /taʔajjuju 'l-ʔihtijājāt/* 'protests flared up' metaphorically describe the protests as a fire that burned universities, then spread and intensified when provoked.

Lexeme إخماد /ʔixmād/ 'extinguish'
Datum (10)

هل ستنجح السلطات في إخمادها مستغلة اقتراب الامتحانات النهائية؟

/hal satanjahu 's-sulṭātu fī ʔixmādhā, mustaḡillatan ʔiqtirāba 'l-ʔimtiḥānāti 'n-nihāʔiyyat?/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

Will the authorities succeed in **extinguishing** them, taking advantage of the approaching final exams.

Data 11

نعمت شفيق... حاولت إخماد اعتصام في جامعتها فأشعلت جامعات العالم

/niʕmat šafīq.. ḥāwalat ʔixmāda ʕ-ʕtiṣāmin fī jāmiʕatihā fa-ʔašʕalat jāmiʕāti 'l-ʕālam/ (AJ 10/05/2024)

Nemat Shafiq... She tried to **extinguish** a sit-in at her university, but ended up igniting universities around the world.

The next lexeme that researchers found was the lexeme */ʔixmād/*. This lexeme is a deverbal noun form of the verb */ʔaxmada-yuxmidu/*. Literally, this lexeme means 'to extinguish', referring to the act of stopping something that is burning. As in the example sentence found in *muʕjam al-ḡanī: سَارَعُوا إِلَى إِخْمَادِ النَّيِّرَانِ /sāraʕū ʔilā ʔixmādi 'n-nīrān/* 'they hurried to extinguish the fire' and in the *Lisan al-'Arab* dictionary: */ʔaxmada fulānun nārahu/* 'Fulan has extinguished his fire'. This example clearly underlines that the lexeme */ʔixmād/* is in the domain of fire.

In the context of Al Jazeera Arabic's coverage of pro-Palestinian student demonstrations, the lexeme */ʔixmād/* is used metaphorically. Contextually, this lexeme does not refer to the literal act of extinguishing fire, but rather to the efforts of certain authorities to stop or suppress the student solidarity movement supporting Palestine. The use of the lexeme */ʔixmād/* also maps the protest movement as a burning fire. The media uses this lexeme to construct an image of the pro-Palestinian student protests as a fire of resistance that will continue to burn and can only be stopped or extinguished if their demands are met. Here, there is a similarity in concept between the target domain of protest and the source domain of fire, both have the potential to spread or grow if not handled, and conversely, to be extinguished if appropriately managed.

Lexeme القادح /al-qādiḥ/ 'lighter'
Datum (12)

كانت الحرب الإسرائيلية الوحشية على غزة ودعم الولايات المتحدة غير المحدود لها القادح في احتجاجات الطلاب الأميركيين، وهي مصدر قلق شديد لإسرائيل

/kānati 'l-ḥarbu 'l-ḡisrāḡīliyyatu 'l-waḥṣīyyatu ṣalā ḡazzah, wa daṣmu 'l-wilāyāti 'l-muttaḥidati ḡayru 'l-mahdūdi lahā 'l-qādiḡ fi ḡiḡtijājāti 'ṡ-ṡullābi 'l-ḡamrikīyyīn, wa hiya maṣḡdaru qalqin ṣādīdin li-ḡisrāḡīl/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

Israel's brutal war on Gaza and the US's unconditional support for it **sparked** protests among American students, which is a source of great concern for Israel

The lexeme */al-qādiḡ/* literally means fire starter. This lexeme is the noun form of the verb *قَدَحَ /qadaha/*, which refers to the act of striking or rubbing two hard objects together to create a fire. Based on its definition, it is clear that the lexemes */qadaha/* (verb) and */al-qādiḡ/* (noun) are related to fire. This is further evidenced by the example given in the Al-Ma'any dictionary "قَدَحْتُ النَّارَ مِنَ الزَّيْتِ" */qadaḡtu 'n-nāra min az-zind/* (I struck a spark from the flint).

In the context of protest discourse, as in data (12), Al Jazeera uses the lexeme */al-qādiḡ/* metaphorically. The Israeli genocide and American government support are understood as the spark that ignited the "fire" of public anger and fueled solidarity in Western universities. Here, there is a metaphorical mapping from the source domain of fire to the target domain of protest. Both share the same conceptual characteristics; both fire and protest are understood as phenomena that grow from a trigger that significantly changes the situation.

Lexeme *ضرام /ḡirām/ 'flame'*

Datum (13)

كان اعتقال الطلبة في جامعة كولومبيا ومعاقبتهم بعد استدعاء رئيسة جامعة كولومبيا نعمت شفيق شرطة نيويورك، بمثابة تيار الهواء الذي غذى ضرام المظاهرات ودفع الكيانات الطلابية للانخراط فيها.

*/kāna ṡ-ṡtiqālu 'ṡ-ṡullābi fi jāmiṡati kūlūmbiyā wa muṡāqabatuhum baṡda ḡistidṡāḡi raḡisati jāmiṡati kūlūmbiyā niṡmat ṣafiḡ ṣurṡata niyūyūrḡ, bimiṡābati tayyāri 'l-hawāḡi 'l-laḡī ḡaḡḡā **ḡirāma** 'l-muṡāharāt wa dafaṡa 'l-kiyānāti 'ṡ-ṡullābiyyat lil ḡinxirāṡi fiḡā/ (AJ 27/04/2024)*

The arrest and punishment of students at Columbia University after Columbia University President Nemat Shafiq called in the New York Police was like a gust of wind that fueled the **flames** of the demonstrations

Another lexeme related to fire found by researchers is */ḡirām/*. In the Al-Ma'any dictionary, this lexeme appears as a nominal phrase, namely *ضرام النار /ḡirām an-nār/* 'flame'. Thus, it is clear that the lexeme */ḡirām/* belongs to the context of fire, as confirmed by its usage in the al-ḡanī dictionary: *إِنَّ الشَّرَاةَ الْخَفِيَّةَ رُبَّمَا صَارَتْ ضَرَامًا* */inna ṡ-ṡarārata 'l-xafiyyata rubbamā ṡārat ḡirāman/* 'In fact, the hidden sparks may have become a blazing fire'.

However, if we examine the contextual meaning, it emerges not in the context of physical fire but rather in the context of a demonstration. In the context of the news, the arrest and punishment of students at Columbia University, following President Nemat Shafiq's decision to call in the New York Police Department to disperse the sit-in, marked a turning point in the escalation of protests. This report is packed with metaphors that liken the protests to a raging fire. The contextual meaning of the lexeme */ḡirām/* can thus be understood through its basic meaning as an intense fire that continues to grow when attempts are made to extinguish it inappropriately. In this context, the word no longer refers to an actual blaze, but instead to the escalation of the student movement.

Lexeme زناد /zinād/ 'ignition'

Datum (14)

ويبدو أن تعاطي رئيسة جامعة كولومبيا الأمني مع الاحتجاجات، والذي دفعها للطلب من الشرطة أن تتدخل وتدخل حرم الجامعة... هذا هو الفتيل الذي أوري زناد الطلبة حول البلاد.

/wa yabdū ʔanna taʔāṭiya raʔīsati jāmiʕati kūlūmbiya 'l-ʔamni maʕa 'l-ʔiḥtijājāt, wa 'l-laḏī dafaṕahā li-ṭṭalabi mina š-šurṭati ʔan tatadaxxala wa tadxula ḥarama 'l-jāmiʕah...hāḏā huwa 'l-fatīlu 'l-laḏī ʔawrā **zinād** ṭ-talbah ḥawla 'l-bilād/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

It seems that the Columbia University president's handling of the protests, which prompted her to call in the police and enter the university campus...this is the fuse that **ignited** the student protests across the country

The above data contains a metaphorical expression marked by the lexeme /zinād/, which is interpreted as a trigger or igniter. This lexeme is a noun form, and its verb form is the lexeme /zanada/, which in the Al-Ma'any dictionary is always used in conjunction with the lexeme /nār/: زَنَدَ النَّارَ /zanada 'n-nāra/ 'to light a fire'. This clearly shows that the lexeme /zinād/ is related to fire.

However, in the context of the protest discourse, this lexeme is not used literally but metaphorically to describe the moment of ignition or awakening of global awareness, especially among students at Western universities, which led them to start a protest movement against Israel's genocide in Gaza. Based on the news context, the president of Columbia University authorized the police to intervene in students' sit-in and camp, which violated academic environmental ethics and ultimately sparked student anger, leading to protests that grew even larger, not only at Columbia University but around the world.

Lexeme غليان /ḡalayān/ 'boiling'

Datum (15)

وصف الناشط نادر حقيقة الأوضاع، وغرد "الجامعات الأميركية في حالة غليان..."

/waṣafa n-nāšīṭu nādiru ḥaqīqata 'l-ʔawḏāʕ, wa ḡarrada: "al-jāmiʕātu 'l-ʔamirikīyyah fī ḥālātin **ḡalayān**.../ (AJ 02/05/2024)

Activist Nader described the reality of the situation, tweeting, "American universities are in a **boiling** state..."

The lexeme /ḡalayān/ 'boiling' in the data (15) also metaphorically. According to the Al-Ma'any dictionary, the lexeme /ḡalayān/ is a deverbal noun form of the verb غلَى /ḡala/, which literally refers to the state of a liquid moving violently (boiling or bubbling) due to high heat. This lexeme is usually used in the context of water and fire. The use of the lexeme /ḡalayān/ is found in the interpretation of the Quran, Surah Al-Anbiya: 100 "وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ" /{wa-hum fihā lā yasma 'ūn} ayy li-šiddati ḡalyāni an-nār/ 'And they cannot hear in it (hell) because of the heat of the raging fire.' This example reinforces that the lexeme /ḡalayān/ is associated with fire.

In the data above, activist Nader uses the metaphor of fire, namely the lexeme /ḡalayān/, to explain the intensity of the emotional and social conditions on campuses in the United States amid increasing student protests in solidarity with Palestine. Conceptual mapping occurs from the domain of heat to the domain of protest. The emotions and actions of students are conceptualized as boiling liquid. When the liquid reaches its boiling point, it will overflow and boil uncontrollably. In this case, the author attempts to explain an abstract concept, namely the condition of massive pro-Palestinian student protests in the United States, through a more concrete concept that is easier for readers to understand, namely the condition of a raging fire.

Lexeme *ساخنة* /*sāxinah*/ 'hot'

Datum (16)

واشنطن- حركة الاحتجاجات الطلابية الساخنة على العدوان الإسرائيلي على قطاع غزة

/*wašintun- ħarakatu 'l-?iħtijājāti 't-ṭullābiyyati s-sāxinah ṣalā 'l-ṣudwān 'l-?isrā?īliyy ṣalā qitāṣa ġazzah*/ (AJ 27/04/2024)

Washington – **Heated** student protests against Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip

The lexeme /*sāxinah*/ in the data above is another metaphorical expression that researchers found in the discourse of pro-Palestinian student protests. This lexeme is an agentive noun form of the verb *سَخَنَ-يَسْخُنُ* /*saxina-yasxunu*/, which literally means 'high temperature'. In general, the lexeme /*sāxinah*/ is used in various contexts, but one of its most frequent and prominent uses occurs in the semantic domain of fire.

Meanwhile, when viewed in the context of the data above, the lexeme /*sāxinah*/ does not describe the condition or nature of the heat of fire, but rather the student protests against Israel's genocide against Gaza, which are heating up in Washington. The metaphorical use of the lexeme /*sāxinah*/ in the context of this protest attempts to convey the idea that the protest is increasing in intensity and tension. The protest is conceptualized as fire by utilizing its inherent hotness, which is already embedded in human knowledge and experience.

Lexeme *شعلة* /*šūṣlah*/ 'flame/torch'

Datum (17)

وانطلقت هذه الهبة من جامعة كولومبيا، وسرعان ما انتقلت شعلتها إلى مئات الجامعات في مختلف أنحاء العالم

/*wa-nṭalaqat hāḏihi 'l-ħabbatu min jāmiṣati kūlūmbiyā, wa surṣān mā ?intaqalat šūṣlathā ?ilā mi?ati 'l-jāmiṣāt fī muxtalifi ?anḥā?i 'l-ṣālam*/ (AJ 03/05/2024)

This movement began at Columbia University and its **flame** quickly spread to hundreds of universities around the world

The data (17) also contains metaphorical expressions through the use of the lexeme /*šūṣlah*/ . This lexeme is basically defined as fire or flame, as found in *muṣjam ar-raid*, where the lexeme /*šūṣlah*/ is collocated with the lexeme /*nār*/: *شعلة النار* /*šūṣlah an-nār*/ . In addition, /*šūṣlah*/ also refers to a tool used to produce intense heat, usually in the form of a thick stick with flammable material tied to it and used to provide light. This tool is called a /*šūṣlah*/ 'torch'. This clearly shows that the lexeme /*šūṣlah*/ refers to fire.

However, the lexeme in the data (17) cannot be interpreted contextually as actual flames but rather metaphorically as the flames of pro-Palestinian protests that spread rapidly across campuses worldwide. This phenomenon of abstract protest spread can be understood through mapping the concept of fire, which can spread rapidly to surrounding areas. Thus, the lexeme /*šūṣlah*/ in this data is classified as a metaphorical unit.

3.2 Discussion

The lexemes identified as presented in Table 1 basically all have lexical meanings that fall within the semantic field of fire. However, in data (1) to (17), these lexemes are not used lexically, but rather metaphorically to conceptualize the act of protest. This is based on conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), specifically through conceptual mapping from the domain of fire as the source domain to the domain of protest as the target domain.

The lexemes *šarārah* (spark), *ṣašṣala* (ignited), *zinād* (ignition), and *qādih* (lighter) describe the stimulus that triggered the protest movement. These lexemes

conceptualize the starting point of the action and the moment of collective consciousness that was able to produce a more massive movement. The lexemes *ʔindalaʕa* (erupted), *ǧalayān* (boiling), and *sāxinah* (hot) describe the intensity of the sudden explosion of protests due to unstoppable public anger. The lexemes *ʔintašara*, *ʔimtadda* (spread), and *ʔajjaja/taʔajjaja* (fuelled) highlight the spread of protests to various universities in different regions. The lexemes *dirām* (flame) and *šučlah* (flame) are mapped to protests and the spirit of solidarity that continues to burn. Finally, the lexeme *ʔixmād* (extinguish) describes the authorities' attempts to stop the pro-Palestinian student protest movement.

In this conceptual mapping, it appears that the attributes or characteristics of the source domain of fire are activated and projected onto the target domain of protest, thus forming the conceptual metaphor PROTEST IS FIRE. The use of these lexemes as metaphorical units aligns with previous studies showing that fire metaphors include lexical elements related to fire's characteristics and functions, such as flames, burning, heat, spreading, and so on (Al Hanada, 2023; Charteris-Black, 2016; Semino, 2021). Archer (2022) emphasizes that these highly diverse, clear, and easily recognizable lexical elements of fire are very effective as persuasive tools that play an essential role in framing certain discourses.

All fire metaphor data are used positively in Al Jazeera Arabic's pro-Palestinian protest discourse because they highlight student actions as a form of resistance, a symbol of humanity, and solidarity with Palestine as a victim of Israeli genocide. Fire metaphors in pro-Palestinian protest discourse do not refer to negative situations but rather to a transformative force that reflects moral and humanitarian life. Fire metaphors can be used positively because of the significant characteristics of fire in the concept of illumination, symbolizing guidance, enthusiasm, hope, and purity (Charteris-Black, 2004).

4. CONCLUSION

This study found 13 lexemes from the domain of fire used metaphorically in pro-Palestinian student protest discourse at Western universities on Al Jazeera Arabic media. Among these lexemes, the lexemes *ʔimtadda* (19 data), *ʔintašara* 'spread' (11 data), and *šarārah* 'spark' (12 data) were the three most frequently occurring lexemes, indicating that Al Jazeera attempted to highlight the aspects of ignition, spread, and impact of the protests.

Al Jazeera Arabic uses fire metaphors as a positive framing strategy for pro-Palestinian student protests, highlighting student actions as a form of resistance and a symbol of humanity. These findings show that Al Jazeera Arabic strategically uses the conceptual metaphor PROTEST IS FIRE to construct a persuasive and emotive narrative. Like fire, protests are also a significant and powerful force. Thus, Al Jazeera represents the pro-Palestinian student protests on Western campuses as a transformative force that has a significant impact, raising collective awareness and inspiring the whole world to take action against all forms of atrocities, including the Israeli genocide.

To gain a broader understanding of conceptual metaphors in protest discourse in the media, future research should explore other source domains (e.g., war, natural phenomena, and journey). Furthermore, comparative media studies, including Western and Arab media, will provide deeper insights into how sociocultural factors and ideological differences affect the construction of metaphorical expressions in pro-Palestinian protest discourse.

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Authors' Contributions

Nadiya Khairunnisa was responsible for the research concept and design, methodology, data collection and analysis, and manuscript writing. Tajudin Nur and Fahmy Lukman as the first author's thesis advisors contributed significantly to the supervision, refinement, and finalization of the manuscript. Both played an important role in providing critical input regarding the interpretation of results, as well as ensuring the validity and adequacy of the data and analysis results.

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