

## Research Article

# Images of International Negotiation in Local News Media Discourse: A War-Court Metaphoric Contrast between Iranian and English News Media Discourses on Nuclear Negotiations

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined how metaphors in the news media of the United States and Iran screened reality about nuclear negotiations. Two corpora, each one comprising nearly 100,000 words, were compiled. Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) and Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) were performed. News media discourse in the US suggested nuclear negotiation was a court in which the US was in the position of prosecutor and Iran as criminal. News media discourse in Iran portrayed nuclear negotiation as an imposed war in which Iran was in position of defending and the US as invading. It was argued that even though they ultimately agreed to a landmark deal, cross-cultural news media discourse readily delegitimized this internationally significant negotiation. Thus, the study suggested that one of the prominent functions of metaphors in news media discourse is to be aggressive and terrorizing rather than tolerating and peace-seeking and as such, media literacy is called for.

## Introduction

Metaphors are enigmatic gateways to the human mind, enabling the exploration of abstract concepts through tangible domains. The recent approaches to culture construction acknowledge that the dynamics of linguistic and social practices, through which metaphors play significant roles, construct cultures. Given the

status of media-connectedness in our world, no culture could be constructed without media's influence. As such, media plays an outstanding role in shaping linguistic and social practices. Some scholars have even put steps further in claiming that media controls and even reframes local cultural practices into a new set of presumably universal standards that, rather than



strengthening cross-cultural Communication , create a mirage of it and in fact, invites to challenge it (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Bennich-Björkman, 2007; Flaitz, 1993; Fornäs, 2020; Fowler, 1987; Francis & Ryan, 1998; Guo, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Lieber & Weisberg, 2002; Piirainen & Sherris, 2015; Tajeddin & Ghaffaryan, 2020).

Such invisible tokenistic practices of media are best practiced through use of metaphors. This is because metaphors are both implicit and persuasive as well as powerful communicative devices (Steen, 2023). As such, since the use of metaphors in news leads to perceiving realities in controlled ways, analyzing metaphors can unravel such hidden complicated ideologies. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) founded the idea of Cognitive Metaphor Theory which can well describe such a conceptualization. Thus, the present study has drawn on Lakoff's (1993) proposal that metaphors are the best tools to bring any conceptual vagueness out of the realm of abstract through introducing it into more concrete domains.

As such, through analyzing metaphorical language in the critical context of news media discourse, cross-cultural Communication can be depicted in a more tangible fashion (Cap, 2006; Chiang & Duann, 2007; Musolff, 2012; Zinken & Musolff, 2009). In this regard, the concern of present study is to highlight metaphorical language in news media discourse through one of the latest approaches to metaphor analysis as the MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010).

## Review of Literature

Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work (Johnson & Lakoff, 1980) significantly shifted the understanding of metaphor, relocating it from

the domain of purely linguistic ornamentation to a central role in cognitive processes. They demonstrated that conventional linguistic metaphors, such as "he attacked my position," are not isolated instances but rather indicative of pervasive, underlying conceptual metaphors, exemplified by ARGUMENT IS WAR. This conceptual mapping facilitates understanding by employing pre-existing knowledge (in this instance, the concept of war) as an analogical framework for comprehending less familiar or abstract domains (such as the concept of argument). Building upon this cognitive perspective, Charteris-Black (2004) introduces a sociocultural lens, viewing metaphor not merely as a cognitive tool, but also as a "social and communicative resource" (p. 17) that enables language users to efficiently enhance the expressiveness of their messages. Within this framework, metaphor emerges as a potent instrument, particularly relevant in the context of mass communication. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) advances the argument that the selection of specific source domains in media discourse is not arbitrary but rather a consequence of the agency of those controlling the narrative. Metaphor, in this view, becomes a vehicle through which particular perspectives and opinions can be expressed and propagated (Xu, 2023), thus shaping public understanding and discourse.

Therefore, in this study it is suggested that metaphors can manipulate thoughts and instill illusion. Illusion conceptually differs from other similar concepts such as lie, hallucination or exaggeration, since it includes an element of intellectual deception (Bhatia, 2007). Therefore, as Fog (2004) put it, with the help of metaphor, the news media discourse can

implant illusion, through which they can implicitly bold differences cross-culturally, create oppositions, and hence, encourage discriminatory ideologies in the public. In this vein, the promised role of mass media in the global village, which was once bringing about closer international and intercultural understanding and relationships would become distorted and the small political societies could bend media significantly in the direction of authoritarianism and intolerance.

Van Dijk (1988) believes the authoritative societies who are in the control of news media discourses compete in a race for impressing and persuading the public through appealing to not only cognitive but also emotional logics both of which can be best fulfilled through the use of metaphors. For this reason, metaphor analysis in news media discourses would be more promising than the analysis of other linguistic devices (Charteris-Black, 2011; Goatly, 2007) since the discourse of mass media is replete with metaphorical language (e.g., Charteris-Black 2011).

There is a wealth of studies on the use of metaphor in political discourse (Agbo et al., 2018; Charteris-Black, 2011; Dávid & Furkó, 2015; Hart, 2008; Huang, 2022; Musolff, 2012; Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018) in which the CDA was performed. CDA applied on metaphors as CMA is concerned with the ways in which metaphors are applied to bring meaning in discourse. The focus is mainly on the social context of metaphors, as well as their underlying conceptual mappings (Musolff, 2023). CMA involves a critical investigation of the ideological patterns embedded in metaphors, with a particular concern on the ways they serve to legitimize or delegitimize power relations. CMA

claims that metaphor is highly influential in discourse. Certain metaphors are deliberately selected to influence understanding and patterns of thought among ordinary people and consequently, metaphors in discourse are meant to exercise power and control (Bogetić et al., 2019; Charteris-Black, 2018).

The CMA has been applied in a number of studies. For instance, Semino et al. (2018) used CMA to find out about the metaphors used in media representations of the Iraq War, and found that the use of war metaphors legitimized the war and delegitimized dissenting voices. In another research CMA was applied to analyze the medical discourse, in relation to disease. For instance, Deignan (2010) analyzed the metaphors applied for the SARS outbreak in media, and find out that disease metaphors constructed a sense of threat and danger. All of these studies indicated an unpleasant and in fact threatening function for metaphors applied in the discourses of news media similar to the function of metaphors suggested in the present study.

Similarly, the MIPVU was applied for several languages such as French, Netherland, Russian, and Serbian (Krennmayr & Steen, 2017), the MIPVU has been applied. However, still very little has been written systematically on applying the MIPVU to Farsi language, only recently a local paper in Farsi as Assi et al. (2022) has applied the MIPVU in a teacher-student discourse. Thus, the present study aimed to address this gap by discussing the application of MIPVU and CMA to Farsi in comparison to English in the context of nuclear negotiation news media discourses analyzed metaphors used in Iranian and American news media discourses (or news media discourses) about

nuclear negotiation with the aim of unfolding what particular metaphors are adopted and used by the Iranian and American sides. For answering this question Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (Steen et al., 2010) was applied both in English and Farsi languages.

## Methodology

### Materials

For the first part of analysis, i. e., MIPVU, two corpora about nuclear negotiation, were compiled from Iranian and American electronic news media discourses, each of which consisted of almost 100,000 words. The selection of news media discourses was based on the pages' popularity among ordinary readers through their number of visitors, because it was assumed that the goal could be better fulfilled in seeking how media would reach out to the public. The most visited pages for both English news media were mainly editorials and the most visited pages for Iranian news media were both editorials and news articles.

Among the most popular electronic newspapers were 'Fars News', 'Isna News' and 'Young Journalist Club' in Iran and 'The Wall Street Journal', 'New York Times' and 'The Washington Post' in the US. Keywords such as 'nuclear', 'negotiation', 'Iran', 'IRI', 'US', 'United States', and 'America', were searched in both Google and Yahoo. The time-frame for sampling the media outlets was 2012-2014, the time were majority of news media discourses intensely focused on the issue of nuclear negotiations and hence, the related news availability was satisfactory and could provide large enough corpora. Data were compiled in two separate Word files, one for American and one for Iranian news media discourses. Due to

local researchers' rare familiarity with the MIPVU method, only one analyst (the researcher) annotated data. However, intra-rater reliability was applied and the researcher repeated data analysis for three times.

As for the selection of dictionaries, a suitable dictionary according to Steen et al. (2010) is to be in the contemporary language and also be corpus-based. It would also be better to use a digital online dictionary for being easily available and so save time. Therefore, for Farsi Abadis dictionary (<https://abadis.ir/>) is used. In this online dictionary various meanings of the word from different dictionaries such as Amid, Dehkhoda, Moein, and Free Persian Encyclopedia are displayed. Through such vast comparison between basic and textual meanings of words are compared. However, these dictionaries were not user friendly and did not follow a clear-cut method for presenting the meaning of words and sometimes they presented old or even dead concepts emanated from old classical texts and poems. Thus, one of the challenges faced in this study was that finding basic and textual meanings of words was not an easy job due to the scarcity of existent dictionaries. From among the dictionaries available in the Abadis website, Amid and Moein were more structured and used easier language. For English part the online Merriam Webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>) and Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy were used (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/legal-rights/>). As for the second part of analysis, i. e., CMA, the metaphors identified by MIPVU went under scrutiny to find out why such metaphors were used in this particular sociopolitical context of nuclear negotiations.

## Procedures

The study started with the method of Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (G.J. Steen et al., 2010) which is an up-dated version of MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) by Pragglejaz Group (2007). The MIPVU suggests one of the major developments in identifying metaphoric language in discourse because it requires reading the whole corpora to find different kinds of metaphoric words. Before MIP and MIPVU, many scholars such as Charteris-Black (2004) used to analyze only one sample of a corpus to locate its metaphors.

The MIPVU consists of 6 steps:

1. Find metaphor-related words (MRWs) by examining the text on a word-by-word basis.

2. When a word is used indirectly and that use may potentially be explained by some form of cross-domain mapping from a more basic meaning of that word, mark the word as metaphorically used (MRW).

3. When a word is used directly and its use may potentially be explained by some form of cross-domain mapping to a more basic referent or topic in the text, mark the word as direct metaphor (MRW, direct).

4. When words are used for the purpose of lexico-grammatical substitution, such as third person personal pronouns, or when ellipsis occurs where words may be seen as missing, as in some forms of co-ordination, and when a direct or indirect meaning is conveyed by those substitutions or ellipses that may potentially be explained by some form of cross domain mapping from a more basic meaning, referent, or topic, insert a code for implicit metaphor (MRW, implicit).

5. When a word functions as a signal that a cross-domain mapping may be at play, mark it as a metaphor flag (MFlag).

6. When a word is a new-formation coined, examine the distinct words that are its independent parts according to steps 2 through 5. Initially, in order to identify whether an expression had been used metaphorically in the corpora, a more basic and concrete meaning of that word/expression was sought for. Then, the candidate metaphor was lifted and entered into a spreadsheet containing some of the instances as well as frequencies of instances of candidate metaphors used in that corpora. This type of metaphor was called implicit (MRW, implicit) and/or indirect metaphor (inMet).

In the next steps, in addition to indirect and classical metaphors, direct and implicit metaphors as well as metaphorical flags were identified. In direct metaphors, no contrast between contextual and basic meanings can be found. In these cases, metaphor is displayed through direct language. An instance in Farsi can be an expression addressing a strong person as ‘be like a mount!’ Here, the contextual meaning of standing firmly of the lexical unit ‘mount’ is the same as the more basic sense of the word. Given that the line refers to a person, albeit, there is clearly a cross-domain mapping here at play, signaled by the preposition like – what MIPVU terms a metaphor flag (MFlag).

Similarly, implicit metaphor consists of cohesive grammatical or semantic links such as demonstrative pronouns (e.g., that, this). Although implicit metaphors contribute to overall density of metaphors of the given text, implicit metaphors are less interesting in discourse analysis (Nacey, et al., 2019). Because of this, they are not taken into account in this

study. Finally, the MIPVU protocol introduced the term metaphor related words (MRWs), a term that can encompass all of the -three types of metaphor (direct, indirect, and implicit).

### Findings and Discussions

Two frequent types of metaphorical constructs (through MRWs) about nuclear negotiation were found in both corpora. The most frequent MRWs about nuclear negotiation in American news media discourses were categorized under the label of a 'court' and the most frequent MRWs about nuclear negotiation in Iranian news media discourses were categorized under the label of a 'war'. Through the analysis, more light is casted upon the types of most frequent MRWs according to MIPVU.

### Metaphorical constructs (MRWs) of a court in American corpus

Table 1 indicated nuclear negotiation as a court in American news media discourses. In Table 1, total 993 MRWs in American corpus created the conceptual metaphor NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A COURT as the most frequent metaphor about nuclear negotiation in American corpus where the US is referred to as a Prosecutor. A Prosecutor is a public official charged with the investigation and prosecution of punishable acts on behalf of an international commission (Merriam-Webster n.d.). The MRWs were mainly nouns (e.g., right, punishment, penalty) but verbs (e.g., to curb, to lift, to press) and prepositions (e.g., sanctions on Iran, under pressure) were also frequent.

**Table 1**

Metaphorical construct & its metaphorical expressions on nuclear negotiation as a court in American corpus

Metaphorical construct	Metaphorical expressions (example)	Frequency
<i>NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A COURT</i>	<i>Penalty/punishment/sanction</i>	535
	<i>Inspect</i>	74
	<i>Right (legal right)</i>	47
	<i>Up-synonym words (e.g., high, upon, up, over)</i>	46
	<i>To restrict</i>	46
	<i>Suspect</i>	39
	<i>To curb Iran ...</i>	38
	<i>To press</i>	20
	<i>To put pressure on</i>	18
	<i>Sanctions hawks</i>	14
	<i>Under pressure</i>	13
	<i>Heavy (brackets, pressure, etc.)</i>	13
	<i>To be aggressive</i>	11
	<i>To undermine</i>	10
	<i>To detect</i>	8
	<i>To lever</i>	8
	<i>To hobble Iran ...</i>	5
	<i>Head off</i>	5
	<i>To hammer out</i>	5
	<i>To underscore</i>	5
	<i>To put demands on</i>	4
	<i>To lift restrictions</i>	4
	<i>Iran falters</i>	3
<i>Under scrutiny</i>	2	
<i>Under sanctions</i>	2	

Metaphorical construct	Metaphorical expressions (example)	Frequency
	<i>US. downplayed expectations (also played down)</i>	2
	<i>A massive sanctions relief windfall</i>	2
	<i>Sneak out scenario</i>	1
	<i>Lift barriers</i>	1
	<i>To keep taps on them</i>	1
	<i>To bludgeon</i>	1
	<i>From fear to greed</i>	1
	<i>To reprieve them</i>	1
	<i>The sticker-shock conversation</i>	1
	<i>Stick or carrot policy</i>	1
	<i>To hit</i>	1
	<i>To set the bar high</i>	1

The most frequent MRWs under the category of court were indirect metaphors such as ‘penalty’, ‘punishment’, and ‘sanction’, with the total frequency of 535. Consider examples (1), (2), and (3) for ‘penalty’, ‘punishment’, and ‘sanction’ respectively:

(1) *French officials have criticized the targeting of BNP Paribas (BNP: FP), the Paris-based lender that faces a U.S. penalty (inMet) of as much as \$10 billion for alleged dealings with Iran*

Merriam Webster online dictionary defines ‘penalty’ as ‘the suffering in person, rights, or property that is annexed by law or judicial decision to the commission of a crime or public offense’. This definition can guide us to decide a court situation could be on demand in the American corpus.

(2) *New punishments (inMet) on Iran “would derail this promising first step, alienate us from our allies, and risk unravelling the coalition that enabled our sanctions to be enforced in the first place”, said Mr Obama.*

According to Merriam Webster online dictionary, the second definition of ‘punishment’ refers to ‘a penalty inflicted on an offender through judicial procedure’. This definition also can guide us to decide a court

situation would be on demand in the American corpus.

(3) *Iran told six big powers on Friday it would not accept their “excessive demands” after the latest talks on lifting sanctions (inMet) against Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear work yielded no breakthrough*

According to Merriam Webster online dictionary, the third definition of ‘sanction’ refers to ‘the detriment, loss of reward, or coercive intervention annexed to a violation of a law as a means of enforcing the law’. This definition also can guide us to decide a court situation is on demand in the American corpus. Similarly, the term ‘right’ used in American corpus was classified as a legal right, as the court would demand. This was also an indirect metaphor with the frequency of 47.

(4) *... Iran suspend 20% enrichment and continue to convert existing stock to oxide in return for recognition of its right (inMet) to enrichment and “lifting of some banking sanctions*

In Merriam Webster online dictionary, the first definition of the noun ‘right’ refers to ‘qualities (such as adherence to duty or obedience to lawful authority) that together constitute the ideal of moral propriety or merit moral approval’. This definition also can guide us to

decide a court situation is on demand in the American corpus. In the same vein, the term 'curb' used 35 times in the American corpus to refer to curbing Iran's enrichment. This was an indirect metaphor to be categorized under the conceptual metaphor NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A COURT.

(5) *Mr. Obama make the case that he is nearing a diplomatic breakthrough in the decadelong effort by the world's major powers to curb (inMet) Tehran's nuclear ambitions*

In the Merriam Webster online dictionary, the second definition of the verb 'curb refers to 'to check or control with or as if with a curb'. This definition also can guide us to decide a court situation is on demand in the American corpus. Moreover, the relationship between the Prosecutor and criminal is mainly referred to in a top-down relationship which was indicated throughout the corpus with the frequency of 22

where Iran was considered in a downer position while the US in an upper position for example 'put sanctions on Iran'.

(6) *the agreement envisages allowing Iran to continue enrichment of uranium (albeit under heavy curbs) In the Merriam Webster online dictionary, the first and second definitions of the preposition 'under' refers to 'in or into a position below or beneath something' and 'below or short of some quantity, level, or limit' respectively.*

This definition also can guide us to decide a court situation, where a top-down relationship exists between the prosecutor and criminal. Thus, this MRW was an indirect metaphor. Finally, the researcher could not find any MFlag related to the court MRWs in the American corpus.

**Table 2**

*Metaphorical construct & its metaphorical expressions on nuclear negotiation as a war in Iranian corpus*

Metaphorical construct	Translation of metaphorical expressions	Metaphorical expressions (example)	Frequency
NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A WAR	1. they deprive us from our rights	ما را از حقمان محروم کنند ...	313
	2. the world war in front of Islamic Republic	جبهه جهانی مقابل انقلاب اسلامی ...	147
	3. the animosity of our enemies from the inception of Islam	دشمنی و عناد دشمنان از صدر اسلام	105
	4. resistant economy	اقتصاد مقاومتی	27
	5. we defend Iran	از ایران دفاع می کنیم.	18
	6. here ... demands the same spirit of holy war	اینجا ... شبیه همان روحیه دفاع مقدس را می خواهد.	۱۲
	7. we have chosen our way to confront invasion	ما راهمان را برای مقابله با تجاوز انتخاب کردیم ...	۱۲
	8. fighting in front of coercion and arrogance is one of the principles of our revolution.	مبارزه با زورگویی و استکبار را یکی از اصول انقلاب میدانیم.	۱۱
	9. To believe in the unchangeable destiny of being under the control and the dominated nations' invasion	برای باوراندن سرنوشت تغییر ناپذیر زیر دست بودن و له شدن ملت‌های تحت سلطه ...	9
	همان جنگ طلبانی	8	
	منفعانه عقب نشینی کرده اند.	8	
	بزرگترین پیروزی	۸	

Metaphorical construct	Translation of metaphorical expressions	Metaphorical expressions (example)	Frequency
	10. <i>this is the same Talibani war</i>	بر تحریمها و تهدیدهای دشمن غلبه کنند.	4
	11. <i>to retrieve passively</i>	در مقابل دشمنان ایستادگی کند.	3
	12. <i>the biggest victory</i>		
	13. <i>to overcome enemies' threat and sanctions</i>		
	14. <i>to resist in front of the enemies</i>		

### Metaphorical constructs of a war in Iranian corpus

In Table 2, total 348 metaphorical expressions in the Iranian corpus created the conceptual metaphor NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A WAR which was the most frequent metaphorical construct in Iranian corpus. The most frequent (313) MRW was 'حق' (hagh) meaning 'right' and 'حقوقی' (hoghoogh) as plural of it). However, this 'right' was differently portrayed than that in American corpus because 'right' in American corpus was a 'legal right' which could be considered as an indirect metaphor under the label of court metaphor. But 'right' in Iranian corpus was considered as a 'natural right', one that is bestowed upon all human beings by God. In Islam religion as well as Farsi language it is culturally accepted and even appreciated to fight for a natural right if it is taken by a cruel agent.

This is because the word 'حق' is an Islamic and thus, Arabic term. Historically, Arabic and Farsi have lived and grown peacefully alongside each other. According to Abadis dictionary (Abadis n. d.) the first definitions referred to 'حق' are 'Allah' as well as 'truth', 'honesty', and 'justice' all of which are also considered as adjectives referred to Allah. According to Islamic traditions, e. g., "Truth (hagh) is a sharp sword against falsehood" (Imam Ali -AS-), for such a 'right' if it is at the disposal of being taken

away, one is permitted to resist as much as possible even it ends to fighting and war.

In addition, the type of metaphorical words in Iranian corpus were mainly nouns (e.g., 'حق' translated as 'right', 'دشمن' translated as 'enemy', 'جبهه' translated as 'war-front') but verbs (e.g., 'شکست خوردن' translated as 'to be defeated', 'عقب نشینی کردن' translated as 'to fight', 'عقب نشینی کردن' translated as 'to retreat') and prepositions (e.g., 'زیر دست' translated as 'under control', 'در برابر' translated as 'under their hand', 'در برابر' translated as 'in front of') were also frequent (Table 2).

All of these MRWs were considered indirect metaphors. It should be noted that there is no resemblance to prepositional verbs in English and Farsi. Such verbs were analyzed as free combinations consisting of two independent lexical units (Nacey et al., 2019)(Nacey, et al. 2019).

(7) جابر انصاری یکی از سفرای جانباز کشورمان نیز در این مراسم در سخنانی با تاکید بر نقش ایثارگران در عرصه دفاع مقدس و همچنین عرصه دیپلماتیک در دفاع از کشور و نظام اسلامی، بر حمایت ایثارگران از تالشهای دستگاه دیپلماسی برای دفاع از حقوق (inMet) ملت ایران در عرصه های بین المللی تاکید کرد.

(7) Jaber Ansari, one of the veteran ambassadors of our country, also emphasized the role of sacrificers in the field of sacred defense as well as the diplomatic field in the defense of the Iranian

nation's rights (inMet) in the international scenes emphasized.

The next most frequent MRW in Iranian corpus was 'جبهه' (Jebhe) translated as 'war front' with the frequency of 147. This was also an indirect metaphor.

(8) ایشان به تلاشهای جبهه (inMet) استکبار برای جلوگیری از پیشرفت نظام اسلامی از همان سالهای آغازین انقلاب اسلامی و معرفی ایران به عنوان کشوری عقب افتاده و ضعیف گفتند: یکی دیگر از برنامه های جبهه (inMet) جهان مقابل انقلاب اسلامی، که تلاش زیادی هم برای آن انجام داده، تأثیرگذاری بر سیاستهای کلان و مقهور کردن اراده مدیریت سیاسی کشور است اما جبهه (inMet) استکبار تا به امروز در این برنامه، شکست خورده (inMet) و در آینده هم به لطف الهی شکست خواهد خورد (inMet).

(8) He said about the efforts of the Arrogant War Front (inMet) to prevent the progress of the Islamic system since the early years of the Islamic Revolution and to introduce Iran as a backward and weak country: Another program of the Global War Front (inMet) against the Islamic Revolution, for which it has made a lot of effort, is to influence on big policies and subjugating the will of the country's political management, but the arrogant war front (inMet) has failed (inMet) in this program up to now and will fail (inMet) in the future with God's grace.

The nuclear negotiation was considered a war due to several other MRWs in the texts that are mentioned here; 'دشمن' [enemy], 'جنگ در' [defend in war], 'دفاع' [resistance], 'ایستادگی' [ennity], 'شکست' [defeat], 'سلطه' [dominant], 'تجاوز' [trespass], 'زور' [force], 'بر' [overcome], 'غلبه کردن' [victory], 'پیروزی' [retreat]. 'عقب نشینی' [in defiance of] and 'مقابل'. Similarly, some other MRWs (table 2) indicated a war concept through a MFlag and a direct metaphor coming after it. This type of MRW

was rarely used specially in American corpus and the researcher's suggestion for such scarcity was that since the issue of nuclear negotiation was a sensitive and important subject in both sides' news discourses, they used indirect metaphors more than direct ones as they could be more influential on their audiences than direct metaphors since indirect metaphors hint a connection in a subtler way than direct metaphors.

Below an example is presented:

(9) اینجا هم شرایط همین (MFlag) بود و شبیه همان (MFlag) روحیه دفاع مقدس (delib) را می خواهد چرا که وقتی غرب ببیند ما راهمان را برای مقابله (delib) با تجاوز (delib) انتخاب کردیم، دیپلماسی جواب می دهد.

(9) The situation was the same (MFlag) here (nuclear negotiation), it demanded the same (MFlag) spirit of the holy war, because when the West sees we have chosen our way to confront with the trespass, diplomacy would answer'.

According Steen (2023) with the use of simile rather than mere metaphors, one can see that the target domain of nuclear negotiation is deliberately described as the holy war. Here Steen believes that such deliberate uses are gateways for being more influential in Mass-Communications. Similarly, he believes that using deliberate metaphors in a news media discourse increases the effectiveness of what the powerful societies behind want to convey to their audiences.

The notable finding is that this deliberate function in Iranian corpus was conceptually similarly grounded as the most frequent non-deliberate metaphors formerly found in the corpus. Using both deliberate and nondeliberate functions in linguistic semiotics here can strengthen the fact that Iranian side

took up a defendant position in a war in front of an enemy and thus, represented the strong war-like position taken up by Iranian news media discourse through metaphors. As such, the overall aforementioned MRWs strengthened the creation of the conceptual metaphor NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A WAR in Iranian corpus.

### **CMA Discussion**

Context as representing communicative aspects of the metaphorical expressions in the discourse is a critical issue in this study. KhosraviNik (2014) asserts that detailed language investigation is affected from various contexts where the language is used. Similarly, Steen (2023) and Semino et al. (2018) assert that metaphorical expressions differ depending on context, who uses them and for what reasons (Hinzenkamp, 1987; Scollon et al., 2011). As such, particular contexts can reinforce special metaphors and hinder others. Moreover, some contexts can become more influential through the use of deliberate metaphors such as the context in this study (news media discourse about nuclear negotiation). Therefore, contextualized analysis of cross-cultural news media discourses in the particular setting of news media discourses about nuclear negotiation can further pave the way for making credible recommendations about which metaphors need to be avoided and possibly which metaphors need to be reinforced or adopted both deliberately and non-deliberately if we want to achieve better intercultural understanding and Communications.

In the present study, the metaphor NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION IS A COURT was the most frequent metaphorical construct in

the American corpus and the most frequent metaphor about nuclear negotiation considered 'right' as a legal right in American corpus (Table 1) while in Iranian corpus 'right' referred to a 'natural right' (Table 2). Legal rights 'exist under the rules of legal systems or by virtue of decisions of suitably authoritative bodies within them' and 'natural rights are those not contingent upon the laws, customs, or beliefs of any particular culture or government, they are universal and inalienable' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.). As such, The American discourse considered Iran as criminal which had not acted according to the Law and for that reason it should receive punishment.

Moreover, in this court a top-down relationship was repeatedly witnessed between the US as a prosecutor and Iran as a criminal where the US as a prosecutor in a court put sanctions *on* Iran as a criminal (more powerful place of the court was considered upper; POWER IS UP). The development of such top-down metaphors throughout the American corpus created a connected pattern of a court where the US was placed at the upper position of court as Prosecutor (Table1) and Iran at the downer position of the court as criminal.

On the other hand, advancing most frequently to a war-like position in the Iranian news media discourse discourses was due to the fact that they regarded their right as a natural right that is bestowed upon them by God's will and because of that, they expected to be in a fair internationally balanced situation where their natural right is reserved but confronting with a court situation and a prosecutor instead of a fair judge, who punished Iran made the Iranian side proceed to consider the US as an enemy and thus, metaphorically speaking a strong war-like

defendant position was created in their news media discourse.

A true international and intercultural interaction requires a balanced status, but the local powerful political parties prefer hegemony and thus, they could delegitimize balanced international negotiations through their mass media (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Mohan et al., 2022). Such influences become stronger when we analyze the functions of metaphors. Because metaphors are much more influential and persuasive means for mass-communication than the more tangible forms of language (Johnson & Lakoff, 1980) especially when both deliberate and nondeliberate metaphors act complementarily. Metaphors capture the heart and mind, and will do that at once. The reason why metaphors are powerful descriptors is that they awaken the imagination and are the best tools for thinking creatively (Lakoff, 1993). Moreover, they filter and define abstract reality in a simpler more concrete fashion (for example, 'the brain is a computer'). In this respect, this study suggests that the cross-cultural news media discourse through metaphors can implicitly and gradually change public metaphor and public thought and imagination in a way to encourage the emergence of discriminatory ideologies cross-culturally rather than creating fair and balanced conditions for better cross-cultural Communication and understanding (Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

## Conclusion

The analysis of news media discourses revealed how metaphors screened reality (Awab & Norazit, 2013). It is suggested that majority of metaphors used in both of Iranian and American news media discourse about nuclear

negotiation indicated uncompromising positions that each news media held toward the other. In American corpus NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION WAS COURT in which the US was Prosecutor who put pressure and sanctions on Iran as the criminal, and in Iranian corpus NUCLEAR NEGOTIATION WAS AN UNFAIR WAR imposed on the Iran and so Iran took up the position of a defendant warrior in front of an enemy.

Therefore, this study aligned with other similarly grounded studies (McEntee-Atalianis, 2011) suggests that one of the most prominent functions of metaphors in news media discourse is to be aggressive, threatening, and terrorizing rather than tolerating, uniting, and peace-seeking, unlike the global call for media-connectedness and globalization which was aimed to make intercultural and international relations stronger and safer. This effect should be taken as a serious concern by the researchers of the field. However, the affluent use of metaphors in mass media through can best instill hegemonic influence on their audiences' minds since metaphors are both implicit and persuasive. Such hegemonic influence can lead to the emergence of divergent ideologies.

Wodak and Busch (2004) believe media discourse producers do their best to manipulate, shape and reshape ordinary people's ideology (Fowler, 1987) which in turn indicates that a very small portion of society, since they are in control, can exert power, stir emotions, and even stimulate provoking actions in public and this is one of the important reasons that has led to the creation of sour intercultural relationships between Iran and America. The findings have implications for raising individuals' critical

awareness of the current expansion of powerful societies' control over the media.

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