

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19949759

# METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF BLINDNESS ACROSS THE MEMOIRS OF MOHAMMAD TAWFIQ BELO ARAB VISUALLY IMPAIRED AUTHOR: HARVEST OF DARKNESS

Duaa Namer Mohammad Khaliel<sup>1</sup>, Malini Ganapathy<sup>2</sup>, Mansour Amini<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Email: ([duaakhalil@student.usm.my](mailto:duaakhalil@student.usm.my))

<sup>2</sup>Email: ([malinik@usm.my](mailto:malinik@usm.my)), Universiti Sains Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Email: ([mansour@usm.my](mailto:mansour@usm.my)), Universiti Sains Malaysia

Received: 15/03/2026

Accepted: 18/04/2026

Corresponding Author: Malini Ganapathy

[malinik@usm.my](mailto:malinik@usm.my)

## ABSTRACT

*The research looks at how Arab author Mohammad Tawfiq Belo used conceptual metaphors to express blindness in his autobiography and used a frame provided by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and used Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) to analyze them. The main objectives of this study were: (1) to identify metaphorical expressions in Belo's writings that depict the experience of losing his vision and (2) identify the predominance of different types of metaphor, along with the source domains of the most frequently occurring types. Through an extensive analysis, the data has revealed a large number of metaphors, which are organized into several systems based on the elements of Structural, Ontological, Situational and Symbolic/Metonymic. The greatest number of metaphors were in the Structural category and represented blindness as an ongoing struggle to survive, and as an event full of conflict, through which people must find a way to move forward, often through means of attack or journeying. However, many instances of ontological metaphors were also evident and helped to define blindness as a set of defined objects that could be utilized, such as the experience of moving from being fully sighted to living a life as a blind person through a series of events, as well as through the dimension of light and the many cycles of time associated with visually impaired people navigating through the dark of night. The metaphor types identified in this research were grouped according to major properties like: Dark, War-related, Travel, Blocking, Act of Nature and Lastly, Hope. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that Belo sees blindness as an emotional experience not just a physical limitation. This study adds to the current body of knowledge surrounding metaphors through the identification of new logical ways of thinking based on non-visual contexts and also adds to the current body of research in the area of the Autobiographical Narrative as a valuable source for understanding the experience of living with a disability. The results advance understanding of how visually impaired authors cognitively and discursively frame sensory loss within Arabic narrative traditions.*

**KEYWORDS:** Conceptual Metaphor, Blindness, Visually Impaired, Metaphor Types.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is traditionally known as having ornamental functions, characterizing a text or a speech with its specific aesthetic value. This means that figurative is novel and creative, in contrast with literal usages that are conventional and usual. Accordingly, “figurative” denotes that usage is extended from a literal usage, whereas “literal” means that a meaning is not dependent on a figurative extension from another meaning. As defined, figurative structures such as metonymy and metaphor are pervasive in language and thought, and figurative meaning is part of the basic fabric of linguistic structure (Athanasidou, 2023; Panther & Thornburg, 2018). Conceptual metaphors are cognitive tools that allow us to understand abstract concepts through concrete experiences, they are pervasive in language, shaping our thoughts and perceptions (De La Hoz Pertuz & Soto-Molina, 2025). Metaphorical language may be contrasted with literal uses of the language in which the meaning of an expression is directly derived from the meaning of its elements (Allott & Textor, 2022). Accordingly, metaphors refer to any word or expression, which has various connotations that are embedded beyond the literal denotation of the word. These non-literal meanings, which are foregrounded, may differ and are likely to be decided according to the context (Bokus & Kałowski, 2017; Dove, 2022). According to contemporary linguists, metaphors are widely used in everyday life, and metaphoric usages can be observed in language, thought, and act (Li & Pang, 2023).

This paper aims at exploring conceptual metaphors of blindness used in the narrative of Mohammad Tawfiq Belo vision loss journey in his well-known book *Harvest of Darkness*. Mohammad Tawfiq Belo is a Saudi writer, journalist, and social activist from Jeddah, widely recognized for his contributions in the field of visual impairment and rehabilitation services. He worked for years with Saudi Arabian Airlines as a flight attendant, in-flight chef, and later a trainer, before being forced into early retirement due to progressive vision loss. His experience both personally and professionally through retinitis pigments shifted his career toward supporting and promoting awareness of, as well as creating new ways to help people who are blind. As the Secretary General of the Saudi Ibsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Blind, he represented Saudi Arabia in international conferences regarding education and rehabilitation of those with blindness. He is also a published author of memoirs and social documents which describe his own experience as

well as the literary legacy of his family combining autobiography with advocacy (Belo, 2019).

Belo's narrative tracks his entire life, from dreaming as a child to fly, becoming a flight attendant and all the way through his experience with becoming legally blind and how that was a defining moment for him, his family and how he identified as a person. Belo illustrates how his vision loss forced him into an early retirement and how that led Belo to feel despondent before ultimately choosing to turn his life into a vehicle for creativity and the evolution of a new traditional role for him. An important episode in Belo's transformation from a flight attendant to being an innovator was when Belo developed a meal specifically designed for use by blind passengers. This meal earned international acclaim for its originality and Belo's contributions to the world of aviation and new approaches for rehabilitating people with vision impairments internationally, specifically at institutions like the Lighthouse in New York City, where he trained to become an independent traveler (Belo, 2019).

### **Thematically, *Harvest of Darkness* explores:**

This Memorandum addresses the psychological and social trauma associated with losing one's vision and provides a range of rehabilitative strategies. It also discusses the role of institutions specializing in rehabilitation to help people become self-sufficient and reintegrate into society. Additionally, it describes how the family and the literary tradition have helped shape an individual's identity as well as their motivation.

The author of this Memoir views his writing as more than just a personal account of his life. Rather, He believes that he has produced a socially engaged document that serves as a practical model for rehabilitation, advocacy and reintegration of blind or visually impaired people within the Arab world. His work is a combination of autobiography, and a social critique of how culturally embedded practices can lead to the isolation of impaired individuals. As such, it can be used as a source of research for those in the disability studies field, rehabilitation, and for creating personal narratives about individuals who are blind or visually impaired (Belo, 2019). Metaphor is an important tool for authors to express their thoughts and feelings. Metaphors help to describe experience by creating vivid images that people can relate to in many ways. Authors use metaphors as mental and persuasive devices. They assign a concrete source domain to abstract concepts or experiences (Herzal & Reiss, 2023).

In writing memoirs, metaphors are both cognitive and rhetorical devices. They create a logical flow of

events in the author's life and help the author interpret his/her experiences (Girardi Ferrari & Da Rosa da Silva Tavares, 2023). By using these metaphors, authors will enhance the aesthetics of their narrative, reveal the author's ideological position, cultural perspective, and personal world view, making them a valuable resource for creating meaningful, effective autobiographical narratives (Freadman, 2023; Stanger Elran, 2019). This paper aims to:

RO1: Identify conceptual metaphors used by the author to conceptualize vision loss in his memoirs

RO2: Explore metaphor types used by the author to conceptualize vision loss in his memoirs

This paper comes to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the author use metaphor to conceptualize vision loss in his memoirs?

RQ2: What are the types of metaphors that are used in the memoirs of Mohammad Tawfiq Belo to express his experiences toward vision impairment Loss?

To understand the significance of this study we should first understand why this study is being carried out. The researcher is herself visually impaired and has an interest in understanding the linguistic aspects of language as it pertains to all groups of visually impaired although specifically those who are visually impaired. The role of conceptual metaphors is significant. As a member of the visually impaired community, the researcher recognizes that metaphor provides some of the most important insight into the experience and the challenges of living with a visual impairment. To study conceptual metaphors from the perspective of CMT increases the importance of this research paper since it is based on an established, comprehensive framework of CMT that illustrates the cognitive processes humans use to make sense of their experiences and thoughts through metaphor (Peradze, 2023; Kravchenko & Yudenko, 2025).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Metaphors create essential connections which help people examine their life experiences because they provide a structure through which people can express their complex feelings and unknown mental states (Turner & Littlemore, 2023). The metaphors create a pathway which enables people to express their inner thoughts while keeping their personal experiences understandable to others. Metaphors function as both language instruments and mental frameworks that determine how individuals understand and respond to their surroundings. The

multiple functions of metaphors demonstrate their value for self-examination and comprehension in different fields which include language studies and psychological research and educational environments and therapeutic practices (Park, 2024; Deldén et al., 2023).

### A) Metaphor and the Reflection of Lived Experience

Metaphor has become established as the primary cognitive tool that people use to organize their understanding of their daily experiences. Through its use as a linguistic tool metaphor enables people to understand abstract and emotional and intricate situations through their direct experiences with concrete things (Zhang et al., 2021; Kövecses, 2018). Current studies show that metaphor functions at the cognitive and bodily and cultural intersection to influence how individuals think about their personal and community experiences (Kövecses, 2018; Banaruee et al., 2019).

Researchers have been studying the relationship between metaphor, cognition and sensory disabilities for many years and, while there is a great deal of theoretical diversity in this area, some areas remain empirically underdeveloped (Liu et al., 2021; El-Sharif, 2022; Abraham et al., 2023). Theoretical diversity exists in this field but researchers have not yet developed empirical studies to investigate all areas of research.

Recent research demonstrates that metaphor functions as an essential tool for expressing bodily and emotional experiences which cannot be described through direct language (Li et al., 2023; Johansson Falck & Wiben Jensen, 2025). In contexts of illness and disability, metaphor becomes particularly significant because it allows individuals to render internal sensations and identity disruptions intelligible (Benavides Fernández, 2023). Metaphor exists as both a language element and an element that creates meaning through reflection in autobiographical writing.

### B) Metaphor in Memoirs and Autobiographical Narratives

Recent studies from the past few years have focused on studying metaphorical language used in autobiographical writing. Memoirs provide a unique context in which individuals retrospectively organize their life experiences, and metaphor functions as a structuring device that creates coherence across time (Arjun.V.C & Geetha Bhasker, 2024; Girardi Ferrari & Da Rosa da Silva Tavares, 2023).

Research shows that memoir writers use sustained metaphor systems which include journey and battle and collapse and rebirth to describe their

important life changes (Ankit Hiraji Banpurkar, 2024; Girardi Ferrari & Da Rosa da Silva Tavares, 2023). The networks of these metaphors connect with key life changes and critical situations to show how metaphor influences identity development through various manifestations.

The research (الحميد عبد, 2024) examines how conceptual metaphors function in "I Am Malala" to demonstrate the cultural depiction of women and the dominance of men. The research studies Malala's life experiences which demonstrate how cognitive factors and cultural elements, and gender relations interact with each other in memoirs. The study demonstrates how metaphorical expressions create patterns in storytelling and help people understand both individual experiences and social problems in memoir writing.

The existing studies about metaphor use in memoirs primarily examine Western medical narratives which exist in English-speaking societies. Non-Western autobiographical traditions and sensory disability narratives remain unexplored by research studies. The research analysis process starts with scientists selecting particular sections of texts instead of examining complete memoirs which hinders their ability to study how maritime nations develop their metaphor systems throughout an entire biography.

#### C) Metaphor in Memoirs of Disabled and Impaired Authors

Most contemporary studies utilize Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Kravchenko & Yudenko, 2025; Hamdi, 2022; Lakoff, 2008) to support the notion that metaphor is a key component of an individual's abstract thought processes, emotional experiences and development of identity as it relates to individuals with sensory disabilities; whereas, recent empirical work has increasingly questioned the conventional assumption that an individual's sensory experiences (primarily in terms of vision) are the primary grounding mechanism for metaphorical framing. Empirical research demonstrates that social-cultural elements create more detailed connections between visual impairment and visual-based metaphorical structures than previously thought (Au, 2022).

Recent studies show that authors with disabilities tend to battle against public metaphors which represent them as "burden" and "tragedy" and "dependency" because they prefer to express their experiences through metaphors about "struggle" and "adaptation" and "empowerment" (Hamdi 2022; Goethals et al. 2020). The research shows that metaphor networks operate as socially constructed

systems which tie back to specific cultural contexts.

The research work presents inconsistent results throughout its entire body of work. Scholars dedicate more research efforts to studying physical disabilities and chronic illnesses than they do to investigating sensory impairments. The majority of research studies Western settings which results in an incomplete examination of autobiographical narratives from Arabic-speaking regions. The current academic studies have not yet established complete research on how different cultures create their own unique ways to express disability through metaphorical language.

#### D) Metaphor Use in the Language of Visually Impaired Individuals

The research work investigates how visually impaired people use metaphors through practical studies which have increased their research scope in the last few years. The research shows that people can understand and use visually based metaphors without needing to see because this assumption has been proven false through scientific investigation. Kim et al. (2021) demonstrate that congenitally blind individuals can acquire colour meanings through linguistic and social experience rather than direct visual perception.

Similarly, Phillips et al. (2023) further this work by investigating an individual born without a sense of touch who uses tactile (i.e., hand-related) metaphors. They provide direct evidence against strong claims for the need for embodiment and instead demonstrate the role of exposure to culture and the use of scaffolding through language, as well as concept transfer. This study is valuable but is based on the case of one individual and, therefore, does not have a high degree of generalizability. Additionally, while Phillips et al. discuss tactile metaphor, they do not cover metaphor use related to disability identity, struggle or loss of sensation, areas in which metaphor is likely to hold much greater narrative significance than in the examples presented in this study.

El-Sharif (2022) shows that congenitally blind individuals in Jordan frequently employ spatial and container metaphors grounded in tactile and kinesthetic experiences. These findings complicate strong embodiment claims in CMT by suggesting that metaphorical cognition may be socially mediated rather than exclusively sensory driven.

The current technological development progress has not resolved all issues that need to be addressed. The research studies use their experimental tasks and their limited sample size and their specific metaphor category which includes colour metaphors to conduct their experiments. The existing research

primarily investigates congenital blindness while showing less interest in studying progressive vision loss. The academic field requires more research to understand how people use metaphors throughout their life stories.

#### E) Identified Gaps and Contribution of the Present Study

The literature provides a critical analysis that identifies areas of research that remain unclear. There are three major areas of gap in current research. The first is that most of the available research is based on small individual studies without enough theoretical integration. The second is that there has been little focus on how visually impaired individuals experience many years of gradual loss of vision, as opposed to those who are congenitally blind. The third is that, even though there is strong evidence that many visually impaired individuals express themselves through very rich metaphorical systems, most of the available research has not examined complete autobiographical narratives of the authors, leaving many unanswered questions about emotional, cognitive, and identity changes in their lives. Finally, there is a severe lack of research from Arabic-speaking countries, which leave many important aspects of culture and language unexamined (El-Sharif, 2022).

These gaps underscore the need for studies that examine how visually impaired authors themselves conceptualize vision loss across time, embodiment, and their personal history. By analyzing the autobiographical narrative of Mohammad Tawfiq Belo, the present study directly addresses these limitations. It offers a comprehensive account of metaphor types and domain mappings used by a visually impaired Arab author to conceptualize his progressive blindness, thereby extending CMT within non-visual experiential contexts and enriching Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) with culturally situated, first-person disability narratives.

### 3. CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

The meaning that a person wishes to communicate during a discourse may either be derived directly from the target domain, i.e., literal meaning or from a source domain, that is, routinely correlated with the target, i.e., metaphorical meaning (Zoltán Kövecses, 2023). Metaphor is the basic mechanism by which individuals grasp abstract ideas and perform abstract reasoning (Fan, 2023). In other words, metaphor is crucial in verbal communication as it enables humans to describe and think about more abstract concepts in relation to more physical and concrete concepts (e.g., Cherkas,

2024; Zoltán Kövecses, 2023; Lakoff, 2008). Metaphor helps people living with illness to communicate their experiences to themselves and to others. In paucity of expressions to effectively express bodily emotions, metaphor helps individuals render unknown physical sensations such as pain more tangible (Wasson, 2023; Venkatesan & Saji, 2020).

A conceptual domain from which humans draw metaphorical expressions to comprehend another conceptual domain is the source domain. Typically, this domain of experience is more concrete or tangible, more directly experienced, and better understood. The target domain, on the other hand, which is generally more abstract, less directly experienced, and less understood, is the conceptual domain that is understood via the source domain and metaphor (Zoltán Kövecses, 2023). A metaphor is a set of mappings between the components of two mental frames. For instance, a traveller's life is a journey, and so is the life of a person leading a life. Mappings between the way of travelling and living, a traveller's destination and an individual's life goals, and the way physical obstacles and life difficulties are produced build the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Zoltán Kövecses, 2023; Kövecses, 2010).

The conceptual metaphor of journey is also common in expressing love relationships. Everyday English expressions such as 'We're at a crossroads', 'I don't think this relationship is going anywhere' and 'Our marriage is on the rocks', to use Lakoff's (2008) examples, demonstrate how Journeys (source domain) are metaphorically mapped onto love (target domain) (Никипорець et al., 2024). What Lakoff (2008) termed conceptual metaphor makes up such mapping. The JOURNEY domain mappings give rise to a specific conception of love in relation to JOURNEY. LOVE IS A JOURNEY is a metaphor since it constitutes a conventional association of a domain with another. It is conceptual because the motivation for metaphor takes place at the conceptual level (Lakoff, 2008). At a deeper level, a conceptual metaphor occurs, linking two otherwise unrelated semantic domains. The linguistic or surface metaphors, on the other hand, are the realizations of the conceptual metaphor (Wasson, 2023; Lakoff, 2008). The metaphorical expressions 'We're at a crossroads', 'I don't think this relationship is going anywhere' and 'Our marriage is on the rocks' are only linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors (Neumair et al., 2025). Conceptual metaphor structures individuals' understanding. Metaphor source domains are based on humans' bodily and sensory-motor experience that develops into the

source of conceptualization and reasoning (Feist & Duffy, 2023; Goatly, 2024).

Metaphors are ubiquitous since they rely on basic and commonly shared schematic knowledge that effectively constructs the capacity of people to reason and interact about several diverse kinds of situations. They reliably communicate an alarming, negatively valenced tone that captures attention and provokes action (Thibodeau & Flusberg, 2022). They are powerful when the source domain brings to mind a salient structure (or emotion), when knowledge of the structure of a source domain, or its emotional connotation, is well known to the linguistic group speakers, and when the comparison between the target domain and the source domain of a particular culture is acceptable (e.g., Marghetis & Matlock, 2024; Zoltán Kövecses, 2023; Lakoff, 2008).

In Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, the authors identified three main categories of conceptual metaphors: orientational metaphors, ontological metaphors, and structural metaphors:

An orientational metaphor is defined as a metaphor which organizes the entire system of concepts with respect to one another; these metaphors are associated with spatial orientational such as, up-down, in-out, front-back, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral. These spatial orientations arise from the fact that people have bodies of the sort we have, and that they function as they do in their physical environment. Orientational metaphors give a concept some kind of spatial orientation; for instance, in English, happiness is assigned some upward orientation; the concept happy is oriented up leads to expressions like "I'm feeling up today".

Oriental metaphors are not arbitrary; they arise from our physical and cultural experience. Even though the oppositions up-down, front-back, etc., are physical, the orientational metaphors that depend on them differ across cultures (N. Vujović, 2024). For example, in some cultures the future is in front of us, whereas in others it is in the back (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 15) (Portuese, 2020). Accordingly, most of our basic concepts are metaphorically organized in terms of one or more spatial orientations. There is an internal systematicity to each orientational metaphor; for example, in the conceptual metaphor happy is up, there is an external systematicity, which defines coherence. Thus, happy is up gives an up orientation to well-being, and this orientation is coherent with spatial cases like health is up, alive is up, and control is up (Bort-Mir, 2020) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 18).

We cannot ignore that "our physical and cultural experience provides many possible bases for

spatialization metaphors. Which ones are chosen, and which ones are major, may vary from culture to culture" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 20). That is why it is difficult to differentiate between physical and cultural bases of a metaphor, because the choice of one physical basis from among many alternative possibilities has to do with cultural coherence (Pitt & Casasanto, 2022).

**The majority of basic values for any culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in that culture. As it is clear in these examples:**

**Example (1)**

- "More is better" is coherent with more is up and good is up. "Less is better" is not coherent with them.
- "Bigger is better" is coherent with more is up and good is up. "Smaller is better" is not coherent with them.
- "The future will be better" is coherent with the future is up and good is up. "The future will be worse" is not.
- "There will be more in the future" is coherent with more is up and the future is up
- "Your status should be higher in the future" is coherent with high status is up and the future is up.

It has been noticed that these values are part of our culture; the expression "The future will be better" is a reflection of the concept of progress. "There will be more in the future" has the same spatial cases as those found in the accumulation of goods and wage inflation; the expression "Your status should be higher in the future" is a statement of careerism. These are coherent with our current orientational metaphors; their opposites would not be. In other words, our values are not independent but must represent a coherent system with metaphorical concepts we live by (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 23) (Marghetis & Matlock, 2024). However, there are some cultural values that are not coherent with the metaphorical system because there are mainly conflicts among these values, which lead to many conflicts among the metaphors related to them. To clarify these conflicts among values (and their metaphors), we must focus on the different priorities given to these values and metaphors by the subculture that uses them. For example, the conceptual metaphor more up usually seems to have the highest priority because it has the clearest physical basis. The priority of more is up over good is up may be noticed in examples like "inflation is rising" and "the crime rate is going up." If we assume that inflation and the crime rate are bad, these statements will mean what they do because more is

up always has the highest priority.

Ontological metaphors take people's experience or substance as an entity even as humans. Showing one of our experiences as an entity enables us to refer to, quantify, and identify a particular aspect of it (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 26). For instance, in the metaphor inflation is an entity, we view inflation (target domain) as an entity (source domain) through our experience of rising prices (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 26) (Mai, 2025).

Ontological metaphors are often based on structural metaphors; for example, the ontological metaphor mind is entity could be the prerequisite of the structural metaphor mind is machine. In addition, container metaphors are a kind of ontological metaphor, which arises via projecting our in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are viewed as containers with both an inside and an outside (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 29) (Budaev & Yuzhaninova, 2020).

In addition, personification is a form of ontological metaphor, which provides the human characters, actions and behaviors to a non-human entity or substance. Besides the inflation is an entity

conceptual metaphor, the concept of 'inflation' can be conceptualized as being a person, and this leads to the metaphor of inflation is a human. If it is very specific, it can be named as inflation is an enemy, inflation is a baby and so on.

Structural metaphors are grounded in correlation with human experience because they enable people to use one structured concept to structure another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 61) (Maisaroh et al., 2025). For example, in the conceptual metaphor ideas are food, we can consider structural similarities between the abstract concept of ideas and that of food. The similarities of the source domain (food) and the target domain (ideas) can be characterized as follows: food can be cooked, and ideas can be thought up; we can swallow food and accept ideas; we chew food, and we perceive ideas; our stomach digests food and our mind understand ideas; we need food for nutrition and understanding gives mental well-being. These previous similarities between the source domain and the target domain can be seen in the form of mapping (Kövecses, 2002, p. 73) (Reed et al., 2023):

Table 1:

FOOD	Mapping	IDEAS
Cooking		thinking
swallowing		accepting
digesting		understanding
nutrition		mental well-being

These conceptual metaphors can also be listed as the metaphor of ideas are food, for instance thinking is cooking (Let me stew over this), accepting is swallowing. (I cannot swallow that claim), considering is chewing (let me chew over the proposal), understanding is digesting (I cannot digest all these ideas), mental well - being is physical nourishment (the thrives on stuff like this).

Symbolic metaphors constitute a distinct type of metaphor in which culturally shared symbols carry meaning beyond their literal referents, allowing abstract or complex concepts to be represented through socially embedded images or motifs. Symbolic metaphors are different from structural and ontological metaphors in that they are based on a shared cultural knowledge and established connections through which people interpret them (J Charteris-Black, 2014; Adedayo, 2025). For instance,

darkness often serves as a symbol for fear, uncertainty, and exclusion, while light represents knowledge, clarity, and empowerment. The symbolic meanings ascribed to both darkness and light have been developed over time rather than being created solely from direct experience. The cane may represent different concepts beyond its actual utility or purpose depending on the context within which it is presented in stories (the cane could symbolize independence, resiliency or social stigma). "Opening doors" metaphorically represents opportunity and access to others; such metaphors stem from general ideologies surrounding the idea of inclusion. Therefore, symbolic metaphors provide context to our lived experiences based on how those experiences have been represented through culture over time; they provide a framework for understanding our relationship to social realities and

how we occupy space within society.

By utilizing CMA, Metaphors are used in autobiographical narratives to develop, negotiate and legitimize the meanings of persons and their societies. With an interrelated conceptualization of the linguistic, cognitive, and critical, CMA allows researchers to follow how choices of expressed metaphors can indicate the presence of ideologies, social positionality and emotional experiences that affect how one narrates him or herself. Through metaphors utilized for interpreting experiences of disability, loss, transformation in occurrence, CMA has the potential to provide a basis for understanding how a metaphor is employed to create one's interpretation of his/her lived experiences.

As an example, where an individual's journey through academics may be metaphorically described as a "battle", this metaphor allows the individual to depict the struggles and challenges that they perceive in their environment; however, where one's loss of sight may be an event that causes a transformational experience, the metaphor of "transition" will allow the individual to show acceptance and the ability to adjust after a particular event. CMA not only identifies metaphors but offers an interpretation of the rhetorical nature of the metaphor and the sociocultural significance of the metaphor based on the way in which the metaphor fits into a larger body of discourse (J Charteris-Black, 2014; Sandra Addo Wiredu, 2023). Memoirs and life stories are an excellent example of where CMA is applicable, because they contain metaphors that serve both as cognitive devices but also as ideological statements that demonstrate the manner in which individuals interpret their experiences and the ways in which they add meaning to their lives.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is based on qualitative research using CMT, as proposed by Lakoff (2008). Using a qualitative approach allows this study to interpret and explain how people use metaphorical language to refer to their personal experiences of being vision impaired, rather than counting how often those kinds of words are used in conversations. This research will analyze the texts of the memoirs of Mohammad Tawfiq Belo by interpreting the metaphors contained within them in order to provide the reader with insight into the author's experience of being vision impaired.

This analysis is exploratory in nature; it does not have a set purpose, but instead seeks to identify the different forms of conceptual metaphor that have been used and to identify the cross-domain

mappings that have led to the formation of those types of conceptual metaphors. This approach fits well with the research questions that focus on the different metaphorical strategies used by Belo and how those strategies relate to the author's lived experience of being vision impaired. To accomplish this, this research uses a systematic metaphor analysis that includes three major steps:

1. A Close Reading of the Memoirs in order to Identify Passages Where Figurative Language Supports Views of Disability, Embodiment and Experience;

2. To Systematically Identify the Language of Metaphors Using the Metaphor Identification Procedures (MIP) Developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) to Consistently Distinguish Between Literal and Metaphorical Language;

3. Classifying the Identified Metaphors into Conceptual Domains, such as Light/Dark, Journey, War, Limitation, and Critically Examining the Cross-domain Mappings to Better Understand How Source Domains Inform Ability to See.

Together, this framework ensures that the memoir analyses are a rigorous and contextualized interpretation. It Provides Much More than Just Language Patterns, but Also Representation of the Cultural and Personal Through Metaphorical Expressions.

The primary source or data for this study includes The Memoirs of Mohammad Tawfiq Belo published by [2003] in the Arabic language. The content for analysis consists of both the first and second editions with a total volume of about 300 pages long. The reason for choosing this memoir was to obtain an authentic narrative of the author, as well as to provide a rich linguistic corpus for investigating the metaphorical meaning of disability, among other aspects of the author's lived experience. The collection of text data was done only from the original Arabic memoir in order to maintain the integrity of the metaphorical depictions within the text. Data that were gathered from the original Arabic were digitized and systematically prepared for systematic analysis. In order to keep all of the data representative of the original style of the memoir and the author's lexical choices with no external commentary or adaptations, only the original language text from the memoirs was used.

**Accordingly, data analysis will be established through the following procedures:**

##### **Step 1: Identification of conceptual metaphors**

The Pragglejaz Group (2007) has created a detailed framework for how to identify and classify metaphors using the MIP (Nguyen, 2023). The

founders of this project were a consortium of professors from many disciplines that study how to categorize metaphors: Peter Crisp, Ray Gibbs, Alan Cienki, Gerard Steen, Graham Low, Lynne Cameron, Elena Semino, Joe Grady, Alice Deignan, and Zoltán Kövecses. Their common goal was to build a standardized methodology across all disciplines that would allow people to identify metaphors consistently, regardless of their background. The MIP focuses on identifying the most common type of metaphor found in cognitive linguistics, which is called an "indirect metaphor," and has the following procedural steps for identifying these types of metaphors (Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Nguyen, 2023):

1. Read the entire text or discourse carefully to gain a comprehensive understanding of its overall meaning.

2. Identify all lexical units within the text or discourse.

3a. for each lexical unit, determine its contextual meaning how it functions within the situation described by the text. Consider the surrounding linguistic context.

3b. for each unit, determine whether it possesses a more basic, contemporary meaning in other contexts. Typically, basic meanings are:

- more concrete (i.e., easier to visualize, hear, feel, smell, or taste),
- related to physical or bodily experiences,
- more specific rather than abstract,
- historically older.
- Note that the basic meaning may not always be the most frequently used one.

3c. if a lexical unit has a more basic meaning in other contexts than in the current one, evaluate whether the contextual meaning contrasts with but can still be interpreted through comparison with the basic meaning.

4. If so, classify the lexical unit as metaphorical.

Importantly, MIP is applicable to both conventional and novel metaphors, as long as there exists a perceptible contrast and conceptual linkage between the basic and contextual meanings. This approach offers a robust, replicable mechanism for identifying metaphorical language in authentic

discourse, enabling systematic metaphor research across genres and disciplines.

### Step 2: Mappings and metaphor typology

The current phase is to explain the conceptual metaphors for each type. In this study, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) CMT approach will be adopted in order to determine the conceptual metaphor (Bahadur et al., 2025). The conceptual metaphor will be established by connecting the source domain and the target domain, and it will be written as "A IS B," in which "the target domain, A, is understood in terms of the source domain, B," or simply put, TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN (written in small capital letters) (Kövecses, 2010, p. 91) (Pangastika et al., 2024).

In addition, after the underlying process of conceptual metaphors for each type will be explained, the conceptual metaphors then will be grouped according to the similar Source Domains (SD). Source domains will be analyzed through cross-domain mappings as a representation for source domain / target domain transfer of meaning and then such mappings will be grouped under frequent concepts and themes so that Orientational, Ontological and Structural metaphors will be listed in terms of source domain, target domain, dominant themes.

Finally, all metaphoric expressions will be classified under three groups (A, B, and C) that refer to the main types of conceptual metaphor suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Orientational, ontological, and structural metaphors will be categorized and listed in order to examine the frequency and distribution of metaphor types and salient domains.

## 5. RESULTS

After the completion of metaphor Identification process and data preparation, the researcher comes with a group of data sets that represents the most dominant metaphors used in the memoirs of the visually impaired author to conceptualize blindness during vision loss journey as it is shown in the tables Below:

Table 2: Mappings of Darkness.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
القادم الظلام شبح (shabaḥ al-ḡalām al-qādim) <i>ghost of approaching darkness</i>	Structural	Approaching ghost / enemy	Impending blindness
الظلام شبح مع الصراع (aṣ-ṣirā' ma'a shabaḥ al-ḡalām) <i>ghost struggle</i>	Structural	Battle / fighting	Struggle with blindness
الظلام شبح مع الصراع بداية (bidāyat aṣ-ṣirā' ma'a shabaḥ al-ḡalām) <i>of battle start</i>	Structural	Battle progression	Gradual worsening of blindness

الستار أسدل (usdila as-sitār) <i>curtain fell</i>	Structural	Closing stage / theatre	Ending a life phase due to blindness
مظلم واقع في أعيش (a 'ishu fi wāqi' muzlim) <i>dark reality</i>	Ontological	Darkness as environment	Life shaped by vision loss
قريب الظلام شبح (shabah al-zalām qarīb) <i>ghost of darkness near</i>	Structural	Ghost approaching	Impending blindness
الظلمت أظلمت (azlamat ad-dunyā fi wajhi) <i>dark world turned</i>	Oriental	Darkness covering world	Emotional shock from blindness
خلفي تركت... (taraktu khalfi...) <i>struggles leaving behind</i>	Ontological	Burdens as objects left behind	Transition from difficulties
الظلام تحدي (taḥaddi al-zalām) <i>challenging darkness</i>	Structural	Battle / confrontation	Fighting blindness
الظلام أسر (asr al-zalām) <i>captivity of darkness</i>	Structural	Imprisonment	Restriction caused by blindness
الأيض الظلام (az-zalām al-abyad) <i>white darkness</i>	Structural	Paradoxical light / dark	Low-vision glare phenomenon
الظلام بزوغ (buzugh al-zalām) <i>rise of darkness</i>	Oriental	Darkness rising (vertical motion)	Onset of vision loss
الظلام في أعراض (a 'rād fi al-zalām) <i>symptoms in the darkness</i>	Ontological	Darkness as a container	Early unclear symptoms

Table 3: Mappings of Reflection.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
التعويضية الحواس تتمين (tathmīn al-hawās at-ta'widiyyah) <i>valuing compensatory senses</i>	Ontological	Senses as resources	Adaptation to blindness
منعكسة سلبية بواذر (bawādir salbiyyah mun'akisah) <i>negative reflections</i>	Ontological	Reflection / echo	Negative consequences of blindness

Table 4: Mappings of Decline.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
يوم بعد يوماً تدهور (tadahwur yawman ba'da yawm) <i>deteriorating daily</i>	Oriental	Downward movement	Progressive vision loss
تتضاءل بدأت (bada'at tataḍā'al) <i>began to shrink</i>	Oriental	Shrinking size	Loss of skill/ability
مستقبلية رؤية انعدام (in'idām ru'yah mustaqbaliyyah) <i>no future vision</i>	Structural	Seeing ahead / horizon	Uncertainty caused by blindness
أدائي يتراجع (yatarāja' adā'i) <i>performance declining</i>	Oriental	Downward motion	Reduced confidence/performance

Table 5: Mappings of Obstacle.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
القراءة صعبة... كحاجز (ša'ūbat al-qirā'ah... ka-hājiz) <i>difficulty as a barrier</i>	Ontological	Barrier / object	Inaccessibility of information
الواقع السببي (al-wāqi' as-sayyi') <i>dark reality</i>	Ontological	Darkness as substance	Grim truth about vision loss
ظروفي تدفعني (taḍfā'unī zurūfi) <i>conditions push me</i>	Ontological	Physical force	Blindness causing restrictions

Table 6: Mappings of Journey.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
التطبيق مشوار (mashwār at-taṭbiq) <i>journey of idea</i>	Structural	Journey / process	Emotional struggle with blindness
المنعكسة الآثار (al-āthār al-mun'akisah) <i>reflected consequences</i>	Ontological	Reflection / rebound	Blindness' impact
مركزية رؤية ذات أصبحت فيها رحلتي (riḥlati fihā ašbaḥat dhāta ru'yah markaziyyah) <i>central vision only</i>	Oriental	Narrow center / spatial narrowing	Restricted visual field
الأوان يحين أن إلى الحياة هذه في يعيشون (ya'ishūna fi hādhihi al-ḥayāh ilā an yaḥīna al-awān) <i>time comes</i>	Ontological	Time as an entity arriving	Inevitable total blindness
ليلاً السيارة قيادة (qiyādat as-sayyārah laylan) <i>driving at night</i>	Structural	Navigation / driving	Loss of autonomy
المشي في أتخط (atakhbatā' fi al-mashy) <i>stumbling</i>	Structural	Disorientation / imbalance	Confusion caused by vision loss

Table 7: Mappings of Attack.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
الفرسبة يصيب سهم (sahm yuṣību al-farisah) <i>arrow striking prey</i>	Structural	Weapon attack	Sudden onset of blindness
مشتعل سهم مثل خبر (khabar mithl sahm mushta'il) <i>flaming arrow in chest</i>	Structural	Fiery arrow	Sudden emotional shock

Table 8: Mappings of Hope.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
إشراق الضوء (ishrāqat aḍ-daw') ray of light	Oriental	Upward / emerging light	Hope emerging
التأول بحبل التعلق (at-ta' alluq bi-ḥabl at-tafā' ul) rope of optimism	Ontological	Rope / lifeline	Emotional survival
الأمل بذور زرع (zara' tu buḍūr al-amal) planting seeds of hope	Structural	Agriculture / growth	Nurturing new hope
عالم جديد (ālam jadīd) new world	Ontological	World as container	New life phase post-blindness
نعمة العمى (al-'amā ni'mah) blindness as blessing	Ontological	Blessing / object of value	Blindness reframed positively
كرمز السوداء النظارة (an-nazzārah as-sawdā' ka-ramz) dark glasses as a symbol	Ontological	Object as symbol	Representation of blindness
الإبرة ثقب من النظر (an-naẓar min thuqb al-ibrāh) seeing through a needle's eye	Structural	Tiny opening	Extremely restricted vision
بصري من تبقى ما (mā tabaqā min baṣari) remaining sight	Ontological	Sight as a resource	Limited remaining visual capacity

Table 9: Mappings of Nature.

Metaphor (Arabic / Transliteration / English)	Type	Source Domain	Target Domain
الأمل غروب (ghurūb al-amal) sunset of hope	Oriental	Downward sun setting	Loss of hope
الحزن بحر (baḥr al-ḥuzn) sea of sorrow	Ontological	Sea as container	Overwhelming sadness
عالم كسيل دموع (dumū' ka-sayl 'ārim) tears like a flood	Structural	Flood	Emotional breakdown
داخلي غضب (ghaḍab dākhilli) inner storm	Structural	Storm	Emotional turmoil

Table 10: Frequency and Distribution of Metaphor Types and Salient Domains.

Metaphor Type	Dominant Domains	Frequency Trend	Interpretive Implication
Structural	Darkness/ghost, battle, journey, natural forces	Highest	Blindness conceptualized as a struggle and evolving process
Ontological	Containers, objects, resources, seas	High	Blindness rendered tangible and material, enabling reflection
Oriental	Verticality, narrowing, light/dark cycle	Moderate	Frames spatial/emotional progression of vision loss
Symbolic	Blessings, identity symbols	Low	Reframing blindness positively or socially

## 6. DISCUSSION

The analysis of Mohammad Tawfiq Belo's autobiographical narrative demonstrates a systematic and ubiquity of metaphor as a cognitive and discursive device to interpret the gradual development of blindness. As shown in the first goal of the study, the extracted metaphors consistently frame deterioration of sight using experiential source domains that show the changing physical, emotional, and social experiences of the author. Achieving the second goal shows that there is not a random use of these metaphors; they form coherent metaphorical systems that organize how blindness is conceptualized, narrated, and emotionally assimilated; the following categories will assist in grouping metaphorical representations of blindness.

- Blindness as Darkness: A Dominant and multi-Layered Conceptual System

The most salient metaphorical pattern is the Darkness = Blindness conceptualization, which appears across multiple expressions (e.g., "الظلام بزوغ" / the rise of darkness," "عيني الظلام غشي أن منذ" / since

darkness covered my eye," "للظلام الاستسلام على أوشكت" / I nearly surrendered to the darkness") whereas this metaphor corresponds to the widely attested cross-linguistic associations between light/vision and darkness/non-vision, but Belo's usage extends beyond its conventional form. He constructs darkness as an active, advancing, and sometimes threatening agent, as seen in "القادم الظلام شبح" / the approaching ghost of darkness" and "الظلام شبح مطاردة" / the ghost of darkness chasing me." Here, darkness does not merely describe the physical absence of sight or light; it behaves like as if it is pursuing enemy, thereby transforming visual loss into a temporal, anticipatory, and fear-inducing experience.

Referring to darkness as "a ghost," "an assailant," and "captor," serves as a form of artistic representation, showing the manner in which darkness is used metaphorically as a means to create a feeling of haunting or inescapability associated with blindness, thereby providing and escalating the emotional aspect of the author's story. The metaphors identified convey the author's

psychological struggles, which align with the CMT of Lakoff and Johnson, indicating that emotional states and the physical body are connected to the experiences associated with the sensation of experiencing familiar sensations as threatening, pursuing, or insurmountable in a fear-inducing manner.

- **Blindness as a Journey: Movement, Transition, and Life-Course Disruption**

Another significant metaphor depicts blindness as a voyage, typically marked by confusion, uncertainty, or forced change. We see clear examples of vision loss being viewed as a battle along a path in phrases like “الظلام أسر من بالتححر مشواري بدأت” / I began my journey freeing myself from the captivity of darkness,” “الأبيض الظلام مع مشواري” / my journey with white darkness,” and “الزمن مع سباق في قدما المضي” / moving forward in a race against time.” This trajectory is rarely straightforward; instead, it involves faltering steps (“المشي في أتخطب كنت” / I was stumbling as I walked”) and the challenge of moving through obstructed or narrowing routes (“من ينظر كمن” / as one looking through the eye of a needle”).

Under this lens, blindness transcends its definition as a medical issue, becoming a trajectory that fundamentally reshapes one's life path and demands significant resilience and adaptation. This concept of a "journey" is applied equally to the collective sphere, critiquing the slow pace of social understanding. By describing a “مشوار إلى بحاجة مجتمع” / a society needing a long journey of awareness,” the author positions the experience of blindness as a dual developmental process one that requires long-term evolution for both the individual and the community.

- **Blindness as Battle, Attack, and Struggle**

Blindness is also constructed through the lens of battle and confrontation. We see this in specific metaphors like “الظلام شبح مع الصراع” / the struggle with the ghost of darkness,” “مشتعل سهم مثل الخبر سماعي” / hearing the news was like a flaming arrow,” and “الظلام تحدي” / the darkness that struck like an arrow.” These descriptions position vision loss not as a condition, but as an external aggressor, evoking themes of self-defense and fragility. Such language reveals that the author perceives the onset of blindness especially the moment of diagnosis as a sudden, violent attack rather than a natural progression.

Using 'battle' as a concept to denote emotional resilience portrays both how individuals experience this struggle for emotional recovery, but also how people see blindness as an enormous threat. The

emotional toll of losing a primary sense (sight) has prompted people to view this experience through the lens of an 'enemy' or 'intruder', reflecting the high level of emotional intensity related to vision loss.

- **Blindness as Loss, Decline, and Collapse**

The narrative captures the worsening nature of Belo's condition through metaphors of shrinking and descent. Whether describing his skills (“بدأت خبرتي” / my experience started to shrink”), his physical sight (“بصري تدهور” / the deterioration of my sight”), or his waning optimism (“الأمل غروب” / the sunset of hope”), the focus remains on a trajectory of loss. This collapse extends to his social environment and career outlook, characterized by the phrase “خيم الحزن / sadness settled like a cloud” and the admission that “بليتمستق رؤية انعدام مع أدائي تدهور” / my performance declined with no future vision.” These images of degradation and "shadowing" do more than describe a medical state; they communicate the gravity and existential crisis of becoming blind.

- **Blindness as Confinement, Obstruction, and Imprisonment**

A further metaphorical cluster frames blindness as restriction, captivity, or barrier. Metaphors such as “صعوبة أواجه” / the captivity of darkness,” “القراءة في حقيقية” / I faced real difficulty in reading,” and “كحاجز البصري العجز” / blindness as an obstacle” conceptualize vision loss as limiting access, movement, and knowledge. These metaphors align with the practical realities of visual impairment, where the loss of sight disrupts autonomy, mobility, and participation.

The author maps blindness to physical restraint and highlights the sensation of being trapped in one's advanced stage of vision loss, which corresponds to narrative disability studies where concepts of being confined generally arise in first-person narratives of degenerative diseases.

- **Blindness as Transformation, Growth, and New Beginnings**

Notably, the narrative also includes positive and reconstructive metaphorical systems. Expressions like “جديد أمل بذور زرعت” / I planted seeds of new hope,” “جديد عالم على مقبل” / entering a new world,” and “العمى” / blindness is a blessing if utilized” reveal a shift toward reframing blindness as a site of growth, adaptation, and new identity formation.

These metaphors contrast sharply with earlier darkness-based images, marking a symbolic transition from despair to acceptance. By mobilising source domains of agriculture (seeds), illumination (light), and rebirth (new world), Belo constructs an alternative narrative in which blindness produces resilience, purpose, and renewed optimism.

The analysis of metaphors, frequency of those metaphor types, and interpretive functions suggests that Belo's memoir creates an understanding of blindness that is multidimensional due to the complex interrelationship between cognitive, emotional, and social framing for living a blind experience. By linking together, the key findings from both research objectives, one can see that Belo doesn't use metaphor only as a style; it's used as a conceptual architecture through which he understands, tells, and finally assigns meaning to the progressive loss of his sight. The relationship between structural, ontological, orientational and symbolic/metonymic metaphors creates an integrated representational system that not only captures the phenomenology (seriously) of visual decline, but also captures the essential reorientation to life that visual decline requires of one who is losing their eyesight.

Structural metaphors (especially regarding darkness, battles, journeys, and catastrophic natural forces) provide the foundation of Belo's story through dynamic and mess-oriented environments. Structural metaphors illustrate that the nature of a person's vision loss is ever changing, often chaotic and frequently changing as well. Thus, structural metaphors allow an understanding of how Belo views time in relation to the concept of blindness; for example, rather than considering this as a fixed entity within the medical profession, the author views it as an ongoing process with periods of raised expectations, an imminent threat, chaos, and ultimately, a period of readjustment.

Ontological metaphors, on the other hand, add depth and form to the abstract experience of losing one's sight. By using "containers," "objects," "substances," and "resources," the author has identified a way to make the abstract experience of vision loss a tangible and identifiable part of the day-to-day experience of the reader. Ontological metaphors also provide a framework for defining and determining how much one has lost ("remaining sight"), how to express these feelings ("sea of sorrow") and what means exist to cope with the loss of a defined and permanent way of coping with life with an impaired vision.

Directional orientation systems also use orientation metaphors to express the direction and spatial orientation of a narrative. Using metaphors conveys the feelings of vertical movement, light/dark cycles, and narrowing movement, which help to understand how Belo's condition progresses downward or narrows over time. Orientation metaphors provide a framework to organize and

store the experiences that visualize the inevitable, heavy and emotionally charged downward trajectory of this person's loss of sight.

Metaphor types correspond to several important source domains (e.g., darkness, conflict, journey, obstruction, natural phenomenon and light/hope) that are evidenced later in the text as referring to more than one of the metaphor types mentioned previously. The connection between these types shows that Belo is using all these metaphors together rather than in isolation as separate entities. The metaphor of darkness refers to the emotional and mental dangers posed by gradually losing one's vision (and other senses). Conflict between different forces (i.e. society at large and the individual's sense of self) illustrates the emotional toll the individual experiences due to blindness, while the idea of conflict is typically used in conjunction with journey metaphors when discussing the effects of vision loss as part of the changing nature of one's life. Obstruction-based metaphors also support the notion that there are social and societal obstacles preventing individuals from achieving autonomy and access to services that support their needs, consistent with a broader discourse regarding disability studies in general. Conversely, light-based, developing and beginning anew metaphors present a competing view that provides hope and strength for continued growth and development as an individual, moving away from being defined solely by one's disability.

Belo's metaphors create a map from blindness to empower and fear, ignorant and transform. His memoir is understood as a cognitive-emotional landscape shaped by metaphor. The use of metaphors shows how blindness can be destabilizing and a force of personal renaissance; the many ways we can experience vision loss are both nuanced and conflicting. The interaction of so many types and domains of metaphors helps to articulate a richer view of blindness, thus increasing our knowledge of disability narratives in Arabic autobiographical writings.

- Contributes to the area of metaphor theory, particularly in non-visual settings.
- Increases the value of CMA through analysis of autobiographical works.

This study's results contribute greatly to the wider research area of conceptual metaphors, especially where visual and/or visual impairment exists. Conventionally, metaphor theories, including the well-known CMT as established by Lakoff and Johnson, postulate that the metaphor is based on all the senses having equal opportunity to experience

the world, and typically revolve around sight-related metaphorical constructs such as clarity, lightness, perspective, and being able to "see through" something. However, as indicated in Belo's memoir, people with visual impairment develop systems of metaphorical thinking that are not based on visual experience, but instead on the use of the body, emotions and schemes about spatial, temporal, and social relationships, which can all be experienced without being able to physically see.

Findings from the Study indicated that there was no decline in the use of Metaphors with people who have lost their vision; they simply found other, More Sensory, Emotional, and experiential representations than sight.

Metaphors that described blindness as a battle, captive, obstacle, and natural disaster were evidence that there are other means of conceptualizing, through Touch, Sound/Kinesthesia, Emotion, etc., rather than Sight.

The present study also showed how Metaphors representing Darkness (a type of Visual Absence) were developed and expanded to include dynamic agents, such as Ghosts, Attackers or Implied Forces, as shown in Belo's narrative.

The present study extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory, because these metaphors were created by people with no vision, 'Low vision', and, therefore, demonstrated that the absence of vision does not restrict nor impede Meaning from being made, but rather encourages a new form of Kelngfadoring (Understanding) through experience.

This research supports the idea that visual experience is the starting point for how humans create useful ideas (metaphor theory). In addition to challenging the assumption that the most important thing is seeing things, this study illustrates how the brain can create and adapt to new forms of experience through changes in the senses. Belo's work is valuable because it demonstrates that the brain creates and uses new forms of experience even without being able to see everything. Additionally, the study advances CMA by applying it to first-person autobiographies of people living with a disability, which is a new area of research. Autobiography gives readers insight not only into how people think about their disabilities, but also into how they feel about them. Readers gain an understanding of the impact of their impairment on their identity and how they cope with and interpret their experience.

CMA gains insight from Belo's autobiography through three distinct lenses:

First, demonstrating coherence in metaphor

structure instead of being isolated instances.

Second, Research indicates that metaphors of obstruction, struggle, journey and renewal are connected to form a system of metaphors used to develop understanding of blindness, thus supporting CMA's idea that metaphor networks share ideological and cognitive coherence.

Finally, illustrating the internal viewpoint of individuals with disabilities versus outside representations representing disabilities; most metaphors used to talk about disability in the public domain come from sighted communities and typically perpetuate stereotypes or provide limitations. By contrast, Belo used self-defined experiential alternatives to represent how he conceptualizes his disability in a way that could serve as a guide for CMA researchers to understand metaphorical perspectives of people living with disabilities or experiencing marginalization.

Therefore, it expands the central concept of CMA by reframing the narrator as the agent of disability.

In showing the benefits of CMA in tracing the process of reconstructing one's identity, this memoir is exemplary of a metaphorical transition from those of darkness, fear and collapse to those of rebirth, light, seed, and new world. CMA reveals this process of transition and thus acts as a means of demonstrating the evolution of coping mechanisms, resiliency and identity development over the life course. By extending CMA's application to include both narrative psychology and the study of embodied phenomenology, this work establishes how CMA can be effectively applied in researching how individual people think about and emotionally react to the changing physical and social-emotional conditions of their lived experience through their own account of events. The application of CMA in this manner broadens the methodological range of CMA and highlights the potential of life-writing as an additional method to utilize in researching the concept metaphors of data generated through the social and temporal context in which a person found himself or herself at the time of the life-writing experience.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In his autobiographical writings, Mohammad Tawfiq Belo presented a metaphorical understanding of his blindness; this study sought to find other ways that Blind people understand their vision loss through metaphorical interpretation. The research identified and analyzed the metaphorical expressions that formed the foundation of Belo's narrative about his sight loss. Using conceptual

metaphors to guide his thoughts on how his vision was changing, the author used structural metaphors based on warfare, darkness, travel, and destructive nature to describe the changing nature of his view of blindness as something that actively challenges, destabilizes, and transforms him through the experience of sight loss. Ontological and orientational metaphors were used to convey how blindness is perceived through bodily experiences of ageing, spreading of weights, and creating new ways to perceive space. Finally, symbolic metaphors provide a counterpoint to older narratives of despair by providing examples of hope, renewal, and personal transformation due to seeing oneself differently.

Belo does not treat blindness as a single type of trauma caused by a medical event but rather views it as a combination of different experiences that occur over time. The results also indicate that the [study] contribute to theoretical knowledge about [metaphors] because they allow for the development

of additional conceptual frameworks regarding how individuals interpret their experience(s) and interact with others in a manner that supports their ability to communicate what they have learned through their experience(s). As evidenced by the CMA method used to conduct this [study], the personal experiences shared in this research can help more clearly articulate the subjective nature of the individual's own belief and emotional systems; thus, giving greater insight into the methodology used to develop these systems of beliefs regarding disability.

The study adds to the general field of research on metaphor and embodiment (as well as Disability research) through an examination of how Visual Impairment authors use metaphor to convey their experiences with nuance, agency, and coherence. Future studies could examine additional autobiographical literature produced by Visual Impairment authors in order to investigate the cross-linguistic/cross-cultural variability of Metaphors for sensory loss.

## REFERENCES

- داليا, الحميد عبد. (2024). A Socio-Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of Woman Representation as Seen in I Am Malala Memoir. *مجلة كلية الآداب - جامعة - ويسالسد جامعة*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.21608/jfask.2024.269662.1131>
- Abraham, A. G., Hong, C. J., Deal, J. A., Bettcher, B. M., Pelak, V. S., Gross, A. L., Jiang, K., Swenor, B. K., & Wittich, W. (2023). Are cognitive researchers ignoring their senses? The problem of sensory deficit in cognitive aging research. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 71(5), 1369-1377. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.18229>
- Adedayo, V. (2025). A corpus-assisted critical metaphor analysis of movement metaphors in university presidents' responses to anti-black violence. *Metaphor and the Social World*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/msw.24017.ade>
- Allott, N., & Textor, M. (2022). Literal and metaphorical meaning: in search of a lost distinction. *Inquiry*, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174x.2022.2128867>
- Ankit Hiraji Banpurkar. (2024). Pain as Literary Art: A Reading of Illness Memoirs to Understand the Use of the Figurative Language to Define Illness, Life and Mortality. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i01.13501>
- Arjun.V.C, & Geetha Bhasker. (2024). Illness as Metaphor in Contemporary Autobiographies: A Theoretical and Methodological Study. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i04.26783>
- Athanasiadou, A. (2023). On the margins of figurative thought and language. *Lingua*, 299, 103655. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2023.103655>
- Au, A. C.-H. (2022). Narrative Metaphors as a Qualitative Analytical Tool: Networked Webs of Oppression and Pedagogical Care for People of Colour in Academia. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 160940692211336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221133637>
- Bahadur, S. A., Ahmed, Dr. R. Z., & Iqbal, R. H. (2025). Analyzing Conceptual Metaphors in Beauty Cream Advertisements: A Corpus-Based Study. *ACADEMIA International Journal for Social Sciences*, 4(3), 825-850. <https://doi.org/10.63056/acad.004.03.0417>
- Banaruee, H., Khoshshima, H., Zare-Behtash, E., & Yarahmadzehi, N. (2019). Several Reasons behind Using Metaphor: A Cognitive Perspective on Metaphoric Language. *NeuroQuantology*, 17(3). <https://doi.org/10.14704/nq.2019.17.3.2001>
- Benavides Fernández, M. (2023). La enfermedad como metáfora: un enfoque desde la hermenéutica de Paul Ricoeur. *EN-CLAVES Del Pensamiento*, 33, e602. <https://doi.org/10.46530/ecdp.v0i33.602>
- Bokus, B., & Kalowski, P. (2017). Editorial Remarks: Beyond Literal Meaning. *Metaphors*. *Psychology of*

- Language and Communication, 21(1), 380–385. <https://doi.org/10.1515/plc-2017-0018>
- Bort-Mir, L. (2020). Going Up Is Always Good: A Multimodal Analysis of Metaphors in a TV Ad with FILMIP, the Filmic Metaphor Identification Procedure. *Complutense Journal of English Studies*, 28, 177–189. <https://doi.org/10.5209/cjes.66959>
- Budaev, Eduard V., & Yuzhaninova, Elena V. (2020). Ontological metaphors as a tool for representation of concept ZORN in the German language. *Current Issues in Philology and Pedagogical Linguistics*, 2(2020), 70–79. <https://doi.org/10.29025/2079-6021-2020-2-70-79>
- Cherkas, N. (2024). THE CONCEPT OF COGNITIVE METAPHOR. *Collection of Scientific Papers “ΛΟΓΟΣ”*, (August 16, 2024; Oxford, UK). <https://doi.org/10.36074/logos-16.08.2024.040>
- Dar Arab Cultural Center, & Mohammed Tawfiq Belo. (2019). *Harvest of Darkness* (Original Arabic: Hasad al-Zalam). [worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org). <https://worldcat.org/title/1259070305>
- De La Hoz Pertuz, M. R., & Soto-Molina, J. E. (2025). La metáfora conceptual en el lenguaje infantil: una visión desde la lingüística cognitiva. *Revista Multidisciplinar Epistemología de Las Ciencias*, 2(3), 1643–1669. <https://doi.org/10.71112/a3yw5879>
- Deldén, M., Gutiérrez Cardoso, N., & Girmarland, L. (2023). La función pedagógica de la metáfora: un estudio de caso de la educación no formal. *Enunciación*, 28, 49–60. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22486798.20518>
- Dove, G. (2022). Metaphor. 175–198. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190061975.003.0009>
- El-Sharif, A. (2022). The Role of Sensory-Motor Experiences and Embodied Cognition in Container-Based Metaphors in the Language of Jordanian Congenitally-Blind Persons. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 14(4), 32. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v14i4.20063>
- Fan, Y. (2023). Poetic Metaphors and Embodied Cognition A Potential Pathway of Mind Development. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 20(1), 238–243. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/20/20231378>
- Feist, M. I., & Duffy, S. E. (2023). To each their own: a review of individual differences and metaphorical perspectives on time. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1213719>
- Freadman, R. (2023). Metaphor in Illness Writing: Fight and Battle Reused. *Life Writing*, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14484528.2023.2207321>
- Girardi Ferrari, C., & Da Rosa da Silva Tavares, V. (2023). “Eu super me lembro de tudo”: linguagem figurada e memória. *Revista de Letras*, 25(47). <https://doi.org/10.3895/rl.v25n47.16226>
- Goatly, A. (2024). *Metaphor, Metonymy and Lexicogenesis*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Goethals, T., Mortelmans, D., Van den Bulck, H., Van den Heurck, W., & Van Hove, G. (2020). I am not your metaphor: frames and counter-frames in the representation of disability. *Disability & Society*, 37(5), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1836478>
- Hamdi, S. (2022). Conceptual metaphors in Abu Qasem Echabi’s *The Will to Life*. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 8(1), 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v8n1.2015>
- HERZAL, A.-M., & REISS, G. (2023). Metaphors – Bridges between Conceptual Domains. *Annals of the University of Craiova. Series Philology. Linguistics*, 45(1-2). <https://doi.org/10.52846/aucssflingv.v45i1-2.107>
- J Charteris-Black. (2014). *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Johansson Falck, M., & Wiben Jensen, T. (2025). Embodied, social, and creative dimensions of metonymy. *Metaphor and the Social World*, 15(2), 185–195. <https://doi.org/10.1075/msw.24034.joh>
- Kim, J. S., Aheimer, B., Montané Manrara, V., & Bedny, M. (2021). Shared understanding of color among sighted and blind adults. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(33), e2020192118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2020192118>
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor : a Practical Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Kravchenko, K., & Yudenko, O. (2025). Cognitive processing of visual metaphor from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. *Mižnarodnij Filološki Časopis*, 58–69. <https://doi.org/10.31548/philolog/1.2025.58>
- Lakoff, G. (2008). *The Political Mind : A Cognitive Scientist’s Guide to Your Brain and Its Politics*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Li, J., & Pang, H. (2023). The Performance of Conceptual Metaphors in Different Language Systems. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 3(1), 899–904. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/3/2022684>

- Li, Y., Guerin, F., & Lin, C. (2023). The Secret of Metaphor on Expressing Stronger Emotion. ArXiv (Cornell University). <https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2301.13042>
- Liu, C., Chang, P.-S., Griffith, C. F., Hanley, S. I., & Lu, Y. (2021). The Nexus of Sensory Loss, Cognitive Impairment, and Functional Decline in Older Adults: A Scoping Review. *The Gerontologist*, 62(8). <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnab082>
- Mai, T. M. (2025). Ontological metaphor in the language of the series *The Leatherstocking tales* by James Fenimore Cooper. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 74, 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v74i1.13075>
- Maisaroh, E., Sumarsih, & Pulungan, A. H. (2025). Structural Conceptual Metaphors of Emotion Expressions Used by Mandailingnese Speakers. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 7(10). <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i10.11097>
- Marghetis, T., & Matlock, T. (2024). Metaphorical Framing of Wildfires Shapes What They Are, How They Act, and How We Should Respond. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 40(1), 38–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2024.2415139>
- N. Vujović, M. (2024). Orientational Metaphors in Italian, Spanish and Serbian Phraseologisms with the Component eye. *Филолог – часопис за језик књижевност и културу*, 15(30), 201–230. <https://doi.org/10.21618/fil2430201v>
- Neumair, P. A., Gehrecke, F. M., Hartmann, S., & Ziem, A. (2025). A frame-semantic approach to conceptual metaphors in the domain of emotion. *Language and Cognition*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2024.37>
- Nguyen, A. (2023). Conceptual Metaphor “Media is Fire.” *Proceedings of the AsiaCALL International Conference*, 4, 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.54855/paic.2345>
- Н и к и п о р е ц њ, С., Степанова, I., Гадајчук, Н., Дерун, В., & Медведсва, С. (2024). EVOLVING EXPRESSIONS: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY AND THEIR SOCIOCULTURAL IMPLICATIONS. *Вісник науки та освіти*, 2(20). [https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2024-2\(20\)-19-33](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2024-2(20)-19-33)
- Pangastika, N. K. W., Dewi, P. C., & Agustia, Km. T. S. (2024). Korespondensi Ranah Sumber Dan Target Yang Ditemukan Didalam Iklan Pariwisata: Pendekatan Konseptual Metafora. *JAKADARA: JURNAL EKONOMIKA, BISNIS, DAN HUMANIORA*, 3(2), 204–208. <https://doi.org/10.36002/jd.v3i2.3241>
- Panther, K.-U., & Thornburg, L. L. (2018). Metaphor and Metonymy in Language and Thought: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach. *Synthesis Philosophica*, 32(2), 271–294. <https://doi.org/10.21464/sp32202>
- Park, J. (2024). Proposed Methods for Enhancing College Students’ Reflective Writing Through the Use of Metaphors. *Korean Language and Literature*, 126, 363–388. <https://doi.org/10.21793/koreall.2024.126.363>
- Peradze, N. (2023). CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND METONYMIES IN “CORALINE” BY N. GAIMAN. *Online Journal of Humanities*. <https://doi.org/10.52340/putk.2023.2346-8149.03>
- Phillips, J. B., Grenoble, L. A., & Mason, P. (2023). The unembodied metaphor: comprehension and production of tactile metaphors without somatosensation. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1144018>
- Pitt, B., & Casasanto, D. (2022). Spatial metaphors and the design of everyday things. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1019957>
- Portuese, L. (2020). Under His Majesty’s Protection. *Eikon / Imago*, 9, 551–569. <https://doi.org/10.5209/eiko.73350>
- Pragglejaz Group. (2007). MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926480709336752>
- Reed, C. N., Strohmeier, P., & McPherson, A. (2023). Negotiating Experience and Communicating Information Through Abstract Metaphor. *CHI ’23: Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3580700>
- Sandra Addo Wiredu. (2023). A Critical Cognitive Analysis of Metaphors in Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Political Speeches. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 6(5), 114–131. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2023.6.5.113>
- Stanger Elran, R. (2019). A Mind Trying to Right/Write Itself: Metaphors in Madness Narratives. *Humanities*, 8(2), 118. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h8020118>
- Thibodeau, P. H., & Flusberg, S. J. (2022). Metaphor and elaboration in context. *Metaphor in Language*,

- Cognition, and Communication, 223–240. <https://doi.org/10.1075/milcc.9.12thi>
- Turner, S., & Littlemore, J. (2023). Literal or metaphorical? Conventional or creative? Metaphor and the Social World, 13(1), 37–58. <https://doi.org/10.1075/msw.00028.tur>
- Venkatesan, S., & Saji, S. (2020). Reflections on the Visceral: Metaphors and Illness Experience. Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v12n1.12>
- Wasson, S. (2023). Guest Editor's Introduction: Pain's Plurals and Narrative Disruption: Communicating Pain and Honoring Its Telling. Literature and Medicine, 41(2), 283–302. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lm.2023.a921562>
- Zhang, D., Zhang, M., Peng, C., Jung, J. J., & Xia, F. (2021). Metaphor Research in the 21st Century: A Bibliographic Analysis. Computer Science and Information Systems, 18(1), 303–321. <https://doi.org/10.2298/CSIS201109059Z>
- Zoltán Kövecses. (2023). Metaphorical Creativity in Discourse. Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature, 47(1), 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2023.47.1.55-70>