Conceptual Metaphors in Abū Qāsem Echābī’s The Will to Life: A Cognitive Semantic Approach

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Abstract

Since the publication of Lakoff and Turner’s seminal book *More Than Cool Reason* (1989), several studies have been done on poetic metaphor in literature, as reflected in the works of Jaberi et al. (2016), Al-Jumaili, (2020), Johansson (2016), Kravets et al. (2021), and Marugina et al. (2014), showing that conceptual metaphor is pervasive in literature. However, to the best of our knowledge, no single study has offered a systematic cognitive analysis of the poems written by the famous Tunisian romantic poet Ab? Q?sem Ech?b?. This study tried to fill this gap, at least partially. It provided a cognitive semantic analysis of Ech?b?’s poem *The Will to Life*, by using the CMT theoretical framework, as propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2002, 2017). The study aimed at identifying the conceptual metaphors underlying Ech?b?’s *The Will to Life*. It used the methodological tools proposed by CMT, such as linguistic metaphor, conceptual metaphor, target domain (TD) and source domain (SD). Data analysis identified several conceptual metaphors in which abstract concepts, such as LIFE, HOPE, DIGNITY, BEAUTY, DREAM and FREEDOM were reified or personified. This study corroborated the CMT claim that humans- poets and non-poets alike - “live by metaphors.”

Keywords:
CMT; cognitive semantic; metaphor; poetry; Tunisian;

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1 Introduction

Poets use metaphors to express their emotions and longings. As stated by Kövecses (2019), “there is no poetry without the use of metaphors in some form”. The author claims that metaphor is pervasive in poetry because “typical topics of poetry, such as love, freedom, beauty, history, time, life, honor, nature, suffering, etc, all invite metaphoric conceptualization, as they are highly abstract concepts”. The study of conceptual metaphors in poetry began with the publication of George Lakoff and Mark Turner’s seminal book *More Than Cool Reason* (1989). The authors argued that poetry, no matter how creative, is based on conventional conceptual metaphors. They illustrated their claim with the three concepts for *death, life, and time* in poetry. Emily Dickinson’s poem “Because I could not stop for death”, for instance, is based on the conceptual metaphor death is departure, as in:

Because I could not stop for death,
He kindly stopped for me-
The Carriage held but just ourselves-
And immortality

The authors argue that Shakespeare uses an extension for the conceptual metaphor *Birth Is Arrival* in *King Lear*:

Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
Thou knows the first time that we smell the air
We waul and cry
In the same vein, Robert Frost uses an extension of the conceptual metaphor *Life Is a Journey* in “The road not taken”:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

Similarly, Milton talks about mortality by using the conceptual metaphor *Time Is a Thief*

How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth?
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!

The authors state that conceptual metaphors are shared by poets and ordinary people because they are based on common bodily experiences. As such, “poetic metaphors” are just extensions of conventional metaphors. Lakoff & Turner (2009) argue that these conceptual metaphors will be the same for poets and non-poets, but differences might be observed at the linguistic level. After the publication of *More Than Cool Reason* (1989), several scholarly studies were done on conceptual metaphors in literature (Jaberi et al., 2016; Al-Jumaili, 2020; Johansson, 2016; Kravets et al., 2021; Burmakova & Marugina, 2014). However, to the best of our knowledge, no single study has provided a cognitive semantic analysis of Abū Qāsem Echābī’s poems. Abū Qāsem Echābī (1909-1934) was a famous Romantic poet. He was born in the south of Tunisia (Tozeur) and passed away at the age of twenty-five. He wrote a poem collection entitled *Songs of Life* (1933) from which *The Will of Life* is taken. This paper purports to identify the conceptual metaphors underlying his poem *The Will to Life* by using the CMT theoretical framework as propounded by Lakoff, Johnson, Turner, and Kövecses. It attempts to fill a gap in the literature as, to the best of our knowledge, no single study has offered a systematic cognitive semantic analysis of Abū Qāsem Echābī’s poems. The paper comprises three main sections. The first will present the study’s theoretical framework (CMT) and review selected studies done on poetic metaphors within CMT. The second will describe the methodology used for data collection and analysis. The last section will present the study’s results and discussions (Selvi et al., 2018; Pickin et al., 2011).

Theoretical framework: CMT

Since the study uses the CMT theoretical framework, this section will define this theory as well as its main methodological and theoretical concepts, and shed light on its limitations as a metaphor theory (Glucksberg, 2003; Pettit, 1982).

Defining CMT

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) emerged with the publication of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s seminal work, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). The theory perceives metaphor as part of language, thought and action and as a conceptual instrument “for structuring, restructuring and even creating reality” (Kövecses, 2008). Since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson’s book (1980), much metaphor research has been done within the analytical and theoretical framework of CMT (Yu, 2000; Yu, 1998; Yu 1995; Hamdi, 2018; Hamdi, 2016; Hamdi, 2010; Bacz,
Main concepts in CMT

This section will spell out the main theoretical and methodological concepts inherent in CMT. These are: pervasiveness of metaphor, systematic cognitive mappings between two conceptual domains, unidirectionality of metaphor (i.e., the move from concrete domain to abstract domain), metaphor as occurring in language and thought, and conceptual metaphor as grounded in bodily experience (Heimes, 2011; Paiva, 2020).

Pervasiveness of metaphor

Lakof & Johnson (2008), argue that metaphors are pervasive not only in literature, but also in the most mundane everyday conversations. CMT researchers collected linguistic metaphors from diverse sources, such as TV and radio broadcasts, dictionaries, newspapers and magazines, conversations (Kövecses, 2008). They revealed that linguistic communities “live by metaphors.” Linguistic metaphors, such as “defending an argument”, “exploding with anger”, “building a theory”, “fire in someone’s eyes”, “foundering relationship”, “a cold personality”, “a step-by-step process”, “digesting an idea”, “people passing away”, “wandering aimlessly in life” are an integral part of native speakers’ mental lexicon. These metaphorical expressions demonstrate “a high degree of polysemy and idiomaticity in the structure of the mental lexicon” (Kövecses, 2008).

Systematic cognitive mappings between two conceptual domains: TD and SD

According to CMT scholars, the technical definition of conceptual metaphor is as follows: A conceptual metaphor is a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience (Kövecses, 2008). This means that elements of the source domain (SD) are mapped onto elements of the target domain (TD). To illustrate these “cognitive mappings,” researchers give the example of the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS FIRE, as reflected in the following linguistic metaphors: “That kindled my ire,” “Those were inflammatory remarks,” “Smoke was coming out of his ears,” “She was burning with anger,” “He was spitting fire,” “The incident set the people ablaze with anger.” The understanding of the conceptual metaphor anger is fire is based on our comprehension of the cognitive mappings/correspondences between the two conceptual domains anger and fire, as illustrated below:

a. The cause of fire → the cause of anger
b. Causing the fire → causing the anger
c. The thing on fire → the angry person
d. The fire → the anger
e. The intensity of fire → the intensity of anger

Unidirectionality of metaphor

CMT distinguishes between a “source domains” (SD) and a “target domain” (TD). The source domain is concrete, while the target domain is abstract. In the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS FIRE, the source domain FIRE is more experiential and concrete than the target domain, ANGER. CMT argues that for a better understanding of the world, humans tend to use concrete and tangible concepts to comprehend abstract and difficult concepts, such as time, emotions, life, etc. In other words, concrete and tangible domains are utilized by linguistic communities to understand and express more abstract domains (Mezni et al., 2011; Mnif, 2017).

Metaphors as occurring in language and thought

CMT argues that metaphor lies in language and thought. Indeed, linguistic communities utilize metaphors not only to express but also to think about aspects of the world. CMT draws a distinction between linguistic metaphors (i.e., linguistic expressions used metaphorically) and conceptual metaphors (i.e., conceptual patterns we use to think about
aspects of the world). CMT researchers illustrate this distinction between linguistic metaphor and conceptual metaphor through the conceptual metaphor *Life is a Journey*, as follows:

*Life is a Journey* can actually govern the way we think about life: we can set goals we want to reach, we do our best to reach those goals, we can make careful plans for the journey, we can prepare ourselves for facing obstacles along the way, we can draw up alternative plans in the form of choosing a variety of different paths, we can prefer certain paths to others, and so on (Kövecses, 2008).

**Conceptual metaphors as grounded in bodily experience**

CMT argues that conceptual metaphors derive from “image schemas.” These are “abstract, preconceptual structures that emerge from our recurrent experiences of the world” (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Kövecses, 2008). These “preconceptual” structures include container, source-path-goal, force, verticality. For example, the states are containers metaphor derives from the CONTAINER image schema (Kövecses, 2008). In other words, conceptual metaphors are shaped by our physical and bodily experiences with the physical world (Jefferies, 2013; Moscovitch et al., 2006).

**Critique of CMT**

Despite its several strengths, CMT has come under criticism. Several scholars are skeptical about the very existence of conceptual metaphors (Kövecses, 2008). Another criticism asserts that CMT is based on “circular reasoning” in that CMT researchers utilize linguistic metaphors to pinpoint conceptual metaphors, on the one hand, and that at the same time they suggest that the linguistic metaphors exist because of the already present conceptual ones, on the other (Kövecses, 2008). However, the harshest attack on CMT is related to its methodological problems (Kövecses, 2010; Kövecses, 2005). For instance, Deignan (2005); Group (2007), have criticized CMT for two main reasons: (1) CMT does not stipulate clear methodological steps to identify metaphors in discourse, or to distinguish between metaphor and non-metaphor; (2) CMT is based on lexical or intuitive data at a time when the study of metaphor should be based on real and attested data (Yulianti, 2016; Palarivattom & Kochunni, 2015).

**Review of the literature**

This section will review selected studies done on poetic metaphors from a cognitive semantic perspective. These studies involve works (Muliawati et al., 2019; Johansson, 2016; Jaberi et al., 2016). Muliawati et al. (2019) analyzed the use of metaphors in expressing longing in the selected poems in Aan Mansyur’s *There Is No New York Today* (2016). The authors identified the metaphors in the poems and studied how those metaphors “fulfilled the characteristic of longing.” This research used different theories (CMT, the TD and SD distinction) as well as the characteristics of longing as defined by Scheibe, Freund, and Baltes. The results suggest 28 metaphors of longing found in the selected poems of Aan Mansyur: 10 target domains and 22 source domains. The longing characteristics consist of “feeling of incompleteness, personal utopia, emotional ambivalence, tri-time focus, and reflective and evaluative components” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Lakoff & Ortony, 1993; Low et al., 2010). The study suggests that the metaphors used for the feeling of incompleteness links the persona to the negative state of longing; whereas metaphors related to a personal utopia lead to the positive developmental state. In conveying longing, many source domains utilized in the selected poems are from the domain of natural forces. This shows that the writing style of the poet Aan Mansyur is impacted by the Romantic Movement that sees a certain harmony between the poet’s emotions and nature. Johansson & Vinthagen (2016), identifies conceptual metaphors in Leonard Cohen’s lyrics *Ten New Songs* (2001) using the CMT framework. It suggests that Cohen’s lyrics are based on the following conceptual metaphors:

Life is a play, life is a gambling game, a person is a container, life is a journey, friendship/ intimacy is closeness, love is a voyage, a person is a container, life is a precious possession, life is food or drinks, death is the beginning of the day, the beginning of the day is the beginning of a journey, a day is a journey, life is a journey, death is the end of a journey, love is a building/construction, the end of love/life is crucifixion, life is light, life is paradise, life is a misery, life is hell, love is a bond, life is a voyage in spirit, the human body is a container. The author argues that analysis of conceptual metaphors in Cohen’s lyrics shows that context is important and that the lyrics are influenced by the Bible and by Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra*.  

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Another study on poetic metaphor was done (Jaberi et al., 2016). The authors argue that examining mystical metaphors within the CMT framework gives a clearer view of “ambiguous mystical concepts” and can give an accurate explanation of the mapping of an abstract concept based on a concrete one. The paper analyzes mystical love metaphors in two long Persian poems by the Iranian poet, Sohrab Sepehri. The study identifies the following conceptual metaphors:

Cause move properties to affected parties, event are action, intense emotions are heat, long-term purposeful activity is a journey, love is magis, love is the unity (of two complementary parts), progress is a forward motion.

The above studies summarized show that metaphors are pervasive in poetry. They demonstrate that most conceptual metaphors underlying the poems at hand are conventional conceptual metaphors, in which abstract concepts, such as love, life, time and friendship are understood and expressed in terms of more concrete concepts such as objects, possessions, food and journey (Gibbs Jr, 2005; Gibbs, 2009).

2 Materials and Methods

This section aims at describing the methodology used in this study. It involved two main stages: (1) data collection and (2) data analysis.

Data collection

Sources of metaphor

The study adopted Conceptual Metaphor Theory Lakoff & Johnson (2008), as a framework to identify the conceptual metaphors underlying Abū Qāsem Echābī’s poem The Will to Life. Echābī (1909-1934) was a famous contemporary Romantic poet, born in the south of Tunisia (Tozeur). He passed away at the age of twenty-five. The poem was taken from Echābī’s poem collection Songs of Life (1933). The Will to Life represents the poet’s rebellion against French colonization and against Tunisian backwardness and ignorance in the 1930s. Its first two verses are part of the Tunisian national anthem. The Will to Life has been described by several critics as the poet’s scream for freedom, revolution and life. The study used Ghada Mourad’s translation of this poem from Arabic into English (jadaliyya.com).

Identification of linguistic metaphors in Abū Qāsem Echābī’s poem The Will to Life

In order to identify linguistic metaphors in the poem, the criteria proposed by CMT researchers were used. A linguistic metaphor is any expression involving two different domains, thus causing “a semantic tension” resulting from reification or personification (Charteris-Black, 2004; Hamdi, 2018).

Data analysis

After the data collection, metaphors were analyzed in two main phases: (1) the interpretative phase, and (2) the conceptual metaphor identification phase (Hamdi, 2018). Phase 1 highlighted “the semantic tension” that justified the expression’s classification as a metaphor; it identified the key conceptual domains underpinning the linguistic metaphor. In Phase 2, the two conceptual domains identified in Phase 1 were linked by ‘IS’ as stipulated by CMT conventions, e.g. love is insanity (Hamdi, 2018). For ease of reference, a detailed two-phase data analysis was included in the Appendix (See Appendix). Table 1 below illustrates the way in which the data analysis was carried out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic metaphor</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Conceptual metaphor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idhā ash’abu yawman arāda al-ḥayāt.</td>
<td>Life is construed as subject to the people will.</td>
<td>LIFE IS A DECISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If, one day, the people wills to live.</td>
<td>The people is perceived as the decision taker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Results and Discussions

This section is composed of two main parts. The first will present the results obtained from the data analysis. The second will discuss them.

Results

The cognitive analysis of the poem *The Will to Life* identified the following conceptual metaphors: life is a decision, destiny is a person, pain is darkness, traditions/colonization/constraints are a chain, life is a person, people are a liquid, nature is a person, breeze/clouds/stars/the moon are a person, the earth is a person/light is a person, sky/light/soil are objects, soil is a person/dreamer, time is a moving entity/winter is a moving entity, time is a person, time is a container/seasons are objects, dawn is a person, youth is an object, future generations are seeds, future generations are the reservoir of time, future generations are a season, seasons are a person, life is a person, life is a limited resource, evening is magician/evening is a person, time is a container/sadness is autumn/seasons are objects, new life is the rebirth of new branches/time is a person, life is a person/spring is a person, darkness is a person/life is a person/youth is an object, the future is a dream, bright future is birdsong/fragrant flowers/fruit flavor, spring is a moving entity/spring is a song/spring is a person, spring is a person/world/earth is a person/youth is a person/youth is a limited resource, spring is a person/life is an object/future generations are a treasure, dreams are a mountain/good is up/dignity/freedom is up, the earth is a person/light is a person/life is a person, future generations are dancers, bright future is sweet fruit and luscie flowers, future is a soul, the soul is a bird, good is light, the future is a holy song/the temple is a person/dreamer, hardships are fire/hardships are difficult paths, the struggle for freedom/dignity is mountain-climbing, good/decent life/dignity is up, ambition is a heart filled with the blood of youth, change is a wind that fills people’s chests, risk-taking is food/risks are mountains/risk-taking is climbing mountains, unambitious people are stones, the world/cosmos is a person, submission is death, freedom is up, submissive people are dead birds, submissive people are dead people, hope is light, sadness is a person, darkness is a person, death is a dream/dream is a star/dream is an object that can disappear, seeds are a person, longing is a plant/longing is a person, dreams are a person/worshippers/light is god/light is a person, beauty is an object/beauty is a person, existence is a person/life is a person, darkness is a person/discoverer, beauty is an imagination fueler, beauty is a thought inspirer, future is work of magic/god is a magician, future is a soul, soul is a bird, good is up, good is light, future is a holy song, the temple is a person/dreamer, ambition is a flame/life is fire/victory is a person. In what follows, a detailed description of these conceptual metaphors will be provided.

Life is a decision

The poem begins with the conceptual metaphor life is a decision, as shown in example (1):
Example 1:
Idhā ash‘abu yawman arāda al-hayāt
If, one day, the people wills to live
In this conceptual metaphor the target domain is LIFE, and the source domain is DECISION. Life is construed as subject to the people will. The people is perceived as decision taker/maker. It is portrayed as responsible for its own life. It is up to it to live or not to live. This idea defies the religious belief that only God can decide for humans, and that fate is placed in the hands of the Creator.

Destiny is a person

Destiny is personified through the ontological conceptual metaphor DESTINY IS A PERSON, as reflected in example (2):
Example 2:
Falā budda an yastajiba al-qadar
Then destiny must obey
Destiny is personified by being attributed the ability to evaluate the people’s will and respond positively to the people’s decision. Destiny ("al-qadar") is portrayed as compelled to respond to the people’s will to life. It has no choice other than to accept the people will to life. Nothing is stronger than the people’s will. Thus, once the people decides to live, destiny should surrender.
**Pain is darkness**

Pains and sadness are construed through the conceptual metaphor PAIN IS DARKNESS as in example (3):

Example 3:
Wa-lā buddā lil-laylī an yanjali
The night must dissipate

Darkness (“layl”) refers to the poet’s feelings of pain and sadness; pain is associated with darkness. This darkness has to disappear since the people have decided so.

**Traditions/colonization/constraints are a chain**

What restricts the people’s freedom and liberty is expressed in terms of a chain, as in example (4):

Example 4:
Walā buddā lil-qaydī an yankasir
Must the chains be broken

The term “qayd” (“a chain”/“a handcuff”) is used to refer to what constrains the people’s freedom, such as conservative traditions, colonization, and social practices. This chain has to be broken for the people to be set free from different types of restrictions.

**Life is a person**

Life, which is an abstract concept, is personified by being attributed emotions, and by doing what humans usually do, as in examples (5) and (6):

Example 5:
Waman lam yu‘āniqhu shawq al-ḥayāt
And he who is not embraced by life’s longing

In this line, the poet addresses the people. Life is portrayed as having feelings such as passion; this passion should be “embraced” by those who long for freedom and dignity.

Example 6:
Fawāylyn limān lam tashuqhu al-ḥayāt min sa’ātin
Woe to one whom life does not rip

from the slap of victorious nothingness

In example (6) above, life is construed as being able to “slap” the faces of those who do not struggle for their freedom and dignity.

**The people are a liquid**

In the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE LIQUID, the target domain is PEOPLE, the Source Domain is LIQUID. This conceptual metaphor is linguistically realized by example (7):

Example 7:
Tabakhara fī jawwihā wandaṭhar
Evaporates into its air and fades away

Those who do not desire freedom are construed as being a liquid that might evaporate and vanish “into thin air.” Those who do not struggle for a decent and free life do not deserve to exist, and shall disappear in the air as liquids do when put in touch with fire.

**Nature is a person and nature is an object**

Nature is personified and reified through different metaphors. It is reified by being portrayed as an object. It is personified by being depicted as a person, such as a magician, a dancer, a mother. The conceptual metaphor NATURE IS A PERSON is reflected in examples (8)-(17):

Example 8:
Kadhalika qālat li al-kāyināt waḥaddathani rūḥuhā al-mustātīr
Thus told me the beings
And thus spoke their hidden spirit.
Nature is construed as a person able to talk to the poet. The ability to talk reflects the ability to think. Nature is portrayed as having a soul (“rūḥ”). This soul is hidden, and it is up to those longing for freedom to unveil it.
Example 9:
Damdamat al-riḥ bayna al-fijaj wa-fawqa al-jibāl wa- taḥṭa al-shajār
The wind murmured between the cracks, over the mountains and under trees
The wind is construed as able to feel and express anger. This personification is expressed through the use of the verb “damdama” (speak angrily) with the noun, wind.
Example 10:
Waqālat li al-ard lamā saʿalt
And Earth said to me—when I asked her
The earth is perceived as able to tell things to the poet. The ability to talk denotes the ability to think and to reflect. The earth is construed as being able to listen and to react to the poet’s utterances.
Example 11:
Ayā um hal takrahīn al-bashār?
“O mother, do you hate humans?
Nature is construed as a mother “um” (mother). The poet’s calling nature mother reflects the harmony the poet feels with nature. Nature is portrayed as a person that has feelings, such as the feeling of hate.
Example 12:
Osghī liqasf ruʿād waʿazf arriyāḥ wa-waqʿ al-μaṭar
I listened to the thunders’ shelling
The wind’s blowing and the rain’s falling
Nature is portrayed as an artist. The wind is portrayed as a musician able to play an instrument. Rain is construed as dancing. Nature is construed as celebrating the coming of freedom.
Example 13:
Fayantafī assīhr, siḥr anghūṣʿan, siḥr azzuhūr, siḥr athamar
Dies the magic, the branches’ magic,
The flowers’ magic, and the fruits’ magic
Fragrant flowers and the flavors of fruit
Elements of nature (flowers, fruits, and branches) are perceived as having magic. As such, they are able to use magic to change things as skillful magicians usually do.
Example 14:
Wa qāla lī al-ghāb fi riqqatin muḥabbatīn mithla khafq al-watār
The woods told me with tenderness
Lovely, like the fluttering strings
The forest, an element of nature, is depicted as a tender person, able to talk to the poet with “lovely tenderness.” The forest’s tender way of talking is expressed in terms of fluttering strings.
Example 15:
Watalḥū biha errih fi kullī wādīn wa-yādfūmuha assayaʿlu idhā ʿabar
The wind plays with them in every valley,
The flood buries them wherever it goes
Elements of nature (wind, flood and branches) are personified. The wind is described as “playing” (“talhū”) with falling branches, taking them away to different valleys. The flood is described as able to bury these branches on its way. The flood is personified as able to do the act of burying. The branches are personified as able to undergo the act of being buried.
Example 16:
Wa-najī annasīm wa-najī al-ghuyūm wa-najī al-qamar
Whisper to the breeze, whisper to the clouds
Whisper to the stars and whisper to the moon
The conceptual metaphor underlying this linguistic metaphor is breeze/clouds/stars/the moon are a person. In this metaphor, future generations are invited to whisper to the breeze, to the clouds, to the stars and to the moon. Thus, breeze, clouds, stars and the moon are personified by being described as able to be whispered to.
Example 17:
Wa-bārakātī annūr fastaqbīlī shababa al-ḥayāt wakhiṣba al-ʿumur
Be blessed by the light, and welcome young age and life’s affluence.
The conceptual metaphors underlying example (17) are the earth is a person and light is a person. Here, the earth is construed as blessed by light. It is also described as able to welcome/greet young people.
Nature is reified in this poem through the conceptual metaphor nature is an object, as reflected in examples (18)-(19):
Example 18:
Ilaiki al-faḍa, ilaiki adiyā, ilaiki atharā al-ḥalimi al-muzdahir
Here you have the sky, here you have the light
and here you have the blooming dreamy soil
Sky, light, and the soil are portrayed as objects that can be possessed by the earth.
Example 19:
Wasiḥr al-murūj
ashahi al-‘ṭir
The magic of the luscious and fragrant meadow
The conceptual metaphors, the meadow is food/the meadow is an object, underlie the linguistic metaphor (19) above. Here, the meadow is described as fragrant and luscious. It is construed as food that can be tasted and appreciated, and as an object that can smell good (“al-‘ṭir”).

*Time is a moving entity/winter is a moving entity*

Time is construed as a moving entity. This is reflected in example (20):
Example 20:
Yaji ashitā, shītā aḍabāb, shītā athulūj, shītā al-matār
“Come winter, foggy winter, Snowy winter, rainy winter,
Winter is perceived as a moving entity through the use of the motion verb “yaji” (coming). Different types of winter are evoked by the poet: “foggy winter, snowy winter, rainy winter”.

*Time is a person*

Time is construed as a person by being assigned human attributes, as reflected in examples (21)-(22) below:
Example 21:
Wa al’an man lam yumāshi al-zamān
I curse those who do not walk with time
The poet criticizes those who do not defy time. Here, time is construed as a person with whom people might walk “shoulder to shoulder.”
Example 22:
Walām tatarannam ‘adhāra al-saḥar
And the dawn’s virgins did not sing
The conceptual metaphor for example (22) is DAWN IS A PERSON. Here, the dawn is personified by being portrayed as owning virgins that do not sing.

*Future generations are a season
Seasons are a person
Life is a person
Life is a limited resource*

Future generations are construed as a season; seasons and life are perceived as a person. Life is viewed as a limited resource. This is reflected in example (24):
Example 24:
Wa-dhikra Ṿul, waruyā ḥayāt wa-ashbāb dunyā tālāshat zumar
A memory of seasons, a vision of life,
And ghosts of a world steadily vanishing
In this verse, future generations are perceived as the memory of seasons. Like humans, seasons are described as having memories. Life is construed as having a vision and ghosts. Life is also depicted as a limited resource. Thus, it is precious and should be consumed wisely.
Evening is a magician/evening is a person

Evening is construed as a person, as in example (25):
Example 25:
Wasihr almasa ashajiyu al-wadi
The magic of the soft and gentle evening
Evening is construed as a gentle, soft person, as a magician able to do magic. Magicians are able to do wonders. They can go beyond reality and create a better world with their magic.

New life is the rebirth of new branches/time is a person

The idea of a new life that is brighter and better than reality is expressed through the conceptual metaphor new life is the rebirth of new branches.
Time, an abstract concept, is perceived as a person. This is reflected in example (26):
Example 26:
Watahwi alghusun wa awraqhwa wa azhara ’ahdin habibin nadhir
Branches fall along with their leaves
And flowers of a dear and blooming time
Branches fall to be replaced by new branches. These new branches imply the birth of a new revolutionary generation that will work for a better reality and a more decent life. In example (26) above, the abstract concept of time is personified by being described as “dear” (“habibin”).

Life is a person/spring is a person

Life and spring are personified by being attributed human features, as in example (27):
Example 27:
Latifa al-ḥayat alladhi là yumal waqalbu arrabi’ ashajiyu al-khadir
Life’s untedious spirit
And spring’s scented green heart
Life is construed as having a spirit “latif”). Spring is depicted as having a green scented heart (“qalbun shajiyu khaḍir”).

Future generations are seeds
Future generations are the reservoir of time

Future generations will bring about a change in reality. They are perceived as “seeds,” as “the reservoir of time.” This is reflected in example (28):
Example 28:
Watabqa al-budhur allati hummilat dhākhirata ’umrin jamilin ghabar
The seeds that were carried remain, a reservoir of a bygone beautiful era
Future generations are construed as “seeds” (“buḍhr”). These seeds are the reservoir of a beautiful bygone era. “Seeds” imply potential growth and development.

Darkness is a person/life is a person/youth is an object

Darkness and life are personified. Youth is reified by being conceived of as an object. This is reflected in example (29):
Example 29:
Saalatu duja hal tu’id al-ḥayat lima adhbalathu rabi’ al’umur
And I asked darkness: “Does life bring back youth to what it had withered?”
In this verse, “duja” (“darkness”) is construed as a person that the poet can talk to. As such, darkness is a listener. Life is construed as able to give youth back to a person. Youth is construed as an object that can be given back.
The future is a dream
A bright future is birdsong/fragrant flowers/fruit flavor

The future is expressed in terms of a dream, birdsong, scented flowers and flavored fruit. In this conceptual metaphor, the Target Domain (TD) is FUTURE, the Source Domain (SD) is BIRDSONG, FLOWERS, FRUIT FLAVORS. This conceptual metaphor is linguistically realized through the linguistic metaphor in (30):

Example 30:
Wa-hālimatun bi-aghāni aṭṭuyūr wa’iṭr azzuhūr wa-ta’m athamar
Dreaming of birdsong,
Fragrant flowers and the flavors of fruit
The future is described in terms of a dream. A lovely future is construed as birdsong, fragrant flowers and detectable fruit. What these source domains have in common is their positive connotations. They are enjoyable to hear, taste and smell.

Spring is a moving entity/spring is a song/spring is a person

Spring is construed as a moving entity, a song and a person, as reflected in example (31):

Example 31:
Wa-ja al-rabī’u bi-anghāmihi wa-aḥlāmihi wa-ṣibāhu al-‘atir
Came spring with its melodies
With its dreams, its fragrant juvenescence
In example (31), spring is portrayed as a moving entity that can move in the observer’s direction. The spring’s metaphorical motion is expressed through the motion deictic verb “jā” (“come”). Spring is also construed as a song that has melodies. It is personified as having dreams and as being young.

Spring is a person/the earth is a person/youth is a person/youth is a limited resource

Elements of nature (spring and the earth) are personified. Youth is personified and perceived as a limited resource, as in example (32):

Example 32:
Waqabbalaha qubalan fỉ-shifǎh tu’ỉdu ashabǎba alladhỉ ghabar
And spring kissed her on the lips kisses
That return the departed youth
Spring is personified as able to give kisses to the earth. The earth is portrayed as having lips (“shifǎh”). Youth is portrayed as an object that can be brought back; it is a limited resource; it can be consumed. The fact that it is limited means that it is precious and should be consumed wisely.

Spring is a person/life is an object/future generations are a treasure

Abstract concepts, such as SEASONS, LIFE, FUTURE GENERATIONS, are construed in terms of more concrete concepts, such as A PERSON, AN OBJECT, and A TREASURE, respectively, as in example (33):

Example 33:
Wa-qāla lahà qad muniḥti al-ḥayàta wa-ḥullidti fi nasliki al-muddakhari
And said to her: you have been given life and through your treasured progeny immortalized
This line is based on three conceptual metaphors: spring is a person/life is an object/future generations are a treasure. Spring is portrayed as able to talk to the earth. The ability to speak reflects the ability to think. Life is construed as an object that can be given (“muniḥti”). Future generations are portrayed as a hidden treasure. This implies that they should be discovered and exploited wisely.

Dreams are a mountain/good is up/dignity/freedom is up

Dreams are construed as a mountain that people should climb to go to a higher, thus better, place. This is reflected in example (34):

Example 34:
Rakibtu al-munā
I climbed the dreams
The poet expresses the power of ambition by comparing it to “climbing the dreams”. Dreams are conceived of as a mountain that the poet climbs for a better future. Making a dream come true requires hard work and perseverance. “Climbing” is associated with going to a higher, thus, better place. Here, the poet refers to the importance of working to achieve one’s dreams and lead a better life, one of dignity and freedom. The higher position is construed as a good position; the lower is perceived as a low, bad position that people should work to leave it. This linguistic metaphor is based on the orientational conceptual metaphors GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN.

The earth is a person/light is a person/life is a person

Abstract concepts, such as EARTH, LIGHT and LIFE are personified in the poem, as reflected in example (35):
Example 35:
Wa-barakaki annūr fastaqbili shababa al-ḥayāt wakhiṣba al-ʿumur
Be blessed by the light, and welcome young age and life’s affluence.
The earth is construed as blessed by light and described as able to welcome/greet young people. Life is personified by being described as young.

Future generations are dancers
A bright future is sweet fruit and luscious flowers

Future generations are depicted as dancers; a bright future as sweet fruit and luscious flowers, as in example (36):
Example 36:
Famidi kama shiʿt fawqa al-ḥuqul bihulw athimar wa ghadhi azzahar
So swing as you like over the fields
With sweet fruits and luscious flowers
A bright future is described in terms of sweet fruit and luscious flowers. These positive attributes refer to the better life for which the poet is longing.

Youth is an object

Youth is conceptualized as an object, as in example (37):
Example 37:
Saaltu dujā hal tuʿid al-ḥayāt limā adhbalathu rabīʿ al-ʿumur
And I asked darkness: “Does life bring back
Youth to what it had withered?”
In example (37), youth is construed as an object that can be given back.

Time is a container/autumn nights are objects

Time is construed as a container; autumn nights as objects, as in example (38):
Example 38:
Wa fī laylatin min layālī al-kharīf muthaqqala bil-asā waḍajar
On one of those autumn nights,
With sorrow and boredom burdened
The use of the containment preposition IN with a noun denoting time, night (“layl”), expresses the metaphor TIME IS A CONTAINER. Here, the poet uses the season, autumn, to express feelings of sadness. Autumn nights are portrayed as objects that are burdened “heavy” with sadness.

The future is a soul/the soul is a bird/good is up/good is light

The future is perceived as a soul that has wings. A better world is associated with an upward direction and with light. This is reflected in example (39):
Example 39:
Wa-rafrafa ṭuḥun gharib al-jamāl bi- ajniḥatin min ḍiyāyi al-qamar
A soul of singular beauty flickered
With wings from the moon’s luminosity
The bright future is expressed in terms of a beautiful flickering soul. The soul is construed as having wings. Thus it can fly high, like an eagle, to a better place. The wings are described as made out of the moonlight.

The future is a sacred song/the temple is a person/dreamer

The future is construed as a sacred song, and the temple as a dreaming person, as in example (40):
Example 40:
Wa ranna nashīd al-hayāt al-muqaddasi fi haikalin ḥālimin qad suḥir
Life’s holy hymn resounded
In a temple dreamy and enchanted
The bright future is construed as a sacred song; the poet describes the positive change by using religious Christian images, reflected in terms like “ranna” (ring), “nashīd muqaddas” (sacred song), “haykal” (“temple”). The temple is personified as “a dreamer” (“ḥālim’). Dreaming implies imagination, a human feature.

Hardships are fire/hardships are difficult paths

Hardships are depicted as fire and difficult paths through the conceptual metaphors hardships are fire/hardships are difficult paths. This is linguistically realized through the linguistic metaphor (41):
Example 41:
Walam atajannab wu’ūra al-shi’āb walā kubbata al-lahab al-musta’ir
Neither the rugged canyons will I shun
Nor the gushing of the blazing fire
The poet construes hardships as “wu’ūr al-shi’āb” (”difficult paths”) and “kubbat lahab” (“a fireball”). Ambitious persons are portrayed as courageously able to face hardships, despite fire and ordeals.

The struggle for freedom/dignity is mountain climbing
Good is up
Bad is down

The struggle for a better life is conceived of as climbing mountains though the conceptual metaphor the struggle for freedom/dignity is mountain climbing. The dichotomy between a decent life and a miserable one is construed through the orientational conceptual metaphors good is up and bad is down. This is reflected in example (42):
Example 42:
Waman la yuhib su’ūd al-jibāl ya’ish abada addahr bayna al-hufar
He who doesn’t like to climb mountains
Will forever live in the hollows
The poet perceives the desire for freedom and for a decent life as “climbing mountains,” not an easy task. It requires hard work and perseverance. Those who do not climb mountains will live forever in the “hollows” (“ḥufar”). A miserable life is expressed in terms of living in a “hollow.” Thus, decent life is construed as in a higher place, such as a mountain. A miserable life is portrayed as life in a low position, a “hollow.” Example (42) above is based on the orientation conceptual metaphors good is up and bad is down.

Ambition is a heart filled with the blood of youth

Ambition is conceptualized as a heart filled with the blood of youth, as reflected in example (43):
Example 43:
Fa’ājjat bi-qalbi dimā shabāb
The blood of youth in my heart roars
Desiring freedom is portrayed in terms of a heart crammed (“fajja”) with young blood as dust fills a limited space. The collocation of “heart”, “youth” and “blood” in the same metaphor portrays the poet’s strong feelings and longings.

*Change is a wind that fills people’s chests*

The change the poet longs for is described as a wind that fills ambitious people’s chests. This is reflected in example (44):

Example 44:
Waḍajjat biṣadrỉ riyâh ukhar
And more wind in my chest soars
In this line, the desire for change is portrayed as a wind of change that fills the people’s chests.

*Risk-taking is food/risks are mountains/risk-taking is climbing mountains*

Risk-taking is construed through more concrete concepts, such as food and mountains, as reflected in example (45):

Example 45:
Man yastalidhu rukṹba al-kaṭar
Those who enjoy taking risks
The poet refers to risk-taking as the enjoyment of “climbing risks” (“rukṹb al-kaṭar”). Here, the verb “yastalidh” (taste and enjoy) is used to refer to those who work for freedom and for a decent life. Risk-taking is construed as food that is tasty and that ambitious people appreciate. Risk is portrayed as a mountain that ambitious people should climb to bring about positive change in reality.

*Unambitious people are stones*

Unambitious people are described as stones in that they have “lifeless” lives. This is reflected in example (46):

Example 46:
Wa-yaqna’u bil’ayshi ‘aysha al-ḥajar
And I curse those who lead the life of a stone
The poet criticizes those who have no ambitions in life. He perceives them as “stones”.

*The world/cosmos is a person*

The world/cosmos is construed as a person. This is reflected in example (47):

Example 47:
Huwwa al-kawn ḥay yuḥibb u al-ḥayât wayaḥtaqir al-mayta
The universe is alive; it loves life
And despises the dead
The cosmos is portrayed as alive “ḥay.” It has feelings and stances. It can feel love for life. It despises those who have no ambition; it perceives unambitious people as “dead”.

*Submission is death*

*Freedom is up*

*Submissive people are dead birds*

*Submissive people are dead people*

Submission to colonization and social constraints is portrayed in terms of death. Freedom is portrayed as flying to a higher place. These metaphors are reflected in examples (48)-(51):

Example 48:
Wa-yaḥtaqir al-mayta
Those who do not struggle for a better life are referred to as dead.
Example 49:
Falá al-ufqu yaḥḍan mayta aṭṭuyūr
The horizon does not embrace dead birds
Freedom and a descent life are portrayed as in a high upward position in “horizon” “ufuq”. Submission is construed as downwards. Submissive people accept misery. They are construed as “dead birds” (“mayta tuyūr”). The use of the term “bird” (“tuyūr”) means that these people have wings and thus the means to fly off far to a better place, but they choose to remain in misery; and the poet holds them accountable for their misery.
Example 50:
Walà annahlī yalthim mayta azzahr
And bees do not kiss dead flowers
In example (50), submissive people are construed as “dead flowers” (“mayta azzahr”). Once dead, flowers lose their freshness and beauty. They lean towards the soil, and even bees do not go near them.
Example 54:
Wālawlā umūmati qalbī ar-raṭum lamā dhammat al-mayta tilkā al-ḥufar
Were it not for the motherliness of my tender heart
These holes would not have held the dead
To insist on the abject passivity of submissive people, the poet refers to them as dead. Even holes might hesitate to enclose their dead bodies.

Hope is light

In the poem, hope is expressed in terms of light, as in examples (52) and (53):
Example 52:
Sakirtu bihā min dhiyā annujūm
I got drunk on the stars’ light
The poet’s hope for a better future is expressed in terms of “light” (“ḍiyā”) and “stars” (“nujūm”). The poet grows drunk on this light.
Example 53:
Wādāat shumū’ annujum al-widā wa dā’ al-bakhūr, bakhūr azzahari
The candles of the bright stars illuminated the incense, the flowers’ incense perished
The hope for a better future is portrayed in terms of the candles’ bright light (“shumū’ annujūm”).

Sadness is a person

Sadness is personified by being assigned animate traits, as in example (54):
Example 54:
Wa ghannaytu lil huznī hatta sakir
And I sang to sadness, until it too was drunk
Sadness is construed as a person to whom the poet might sing, and as able to appreciate the poet’s singing. It has feelings: it can become drunk on music.

Darkness is a person

Darkness (“ḍalūm”) is personified. This is reflected in example (55):
Example 55:
Falam tatakallam shifāh al-ḍalūm
Darkness’ lips did not speak
Darkness is personified by being attributed “lips” (“shifāh”) with which it can talk. The ability to talk reflects the ability to think. Thinking is a human feature.

Death is a dream/a dream is a star/a dream is an object that can disappear

The poet construes death as a dream, a dream as a star and an object that might disappear. This is reflected in example (56):

Example 56:
Wayafna al-jami’ kahulmin badi’ taalaqa fi muhjatin wandathar
And all die like a marvelous dream
That in a soul shone and disappeared
In this line, death is construed as a marvelous dream. This dream is described as a shining star in the soul; it ends by disappearing (“yandathar”).

**Seeds are a person**

Seeds are construed as a person. This is reflected in example (57):
Example 57:
Mu’âniqa wahya tahta aḍabảb wataḥta thulṹj watahta al-madar
Embracing, while it is under the fog, under the snow, and under the mud.
Seeds are construed as a person able to embrace “mu’âniqa” life under different conditions “under the snow, under the fog, under the mud”.

**Longing is a plant/longing is a person**

Longing is expressed in terms of a plant and of a person, as in example (58):
Example 58:
Wa mà huwwa illâ kakhaf‘i al-janâh hatta namâ shawquha wantaṣar
It took only a wing flap
Till her longing grew up and triumphed
Longing (“shawq”) is portrayed as a seed, a plant that can grow. Longing is also personified by being described as a person able to go into battle and win (“yantaṣir”). Winning a battle implies that the winner has the physical skills that allowed him to win.

**Dreams are a person/worshippers/light is god/light is a person**

Dreams are personified. Light is construed as God and as a person, as in example (59):
Example 59:
Waman ta’budu ennṹr ahlâmuhu yubâriku annṹr anna dhahar
He whose dreams worship the light
Is blessed by the light wherever he appears
In example (59), dreams are described as able to worship. Light is portrayed as God, able to bless those who long for positive change.

**Beauty is an object/beauty is a person**

Beauty is personified and reified in this poem, as in example (60):
Example 60:
Ilayki al-jamâl alladhỉ lâ yubỉd ilaiki al-wujṹd arrahỉb annaḍir
Here you have the undying beauty
And here you have the wide and glowing world,
Beauty is described as an object that can be offered to the earth. It is portrayed as an “undying” person (“lâ yubid”).

**Existence is a person/life is a person**

Existence and life are two abstract concepts that are attributed human features in the poem. This is reflected in example (61):
Example 61:
Wa-nâajî al-ḥayâta wa- ashwâqîhâ wa- fitnata hâdhâ al-wujûd al-aghar
Whisper to life and its longings,  
To the charm of this attractive existence  
The poet is inviting posterity to whisper to life and to the beauty of existence. Existence is portrayed as an “attractive” (“aghar”) and “charming” (“fitnata”) person; life is portrayed as having emotions, such as longings (“ashwaq”).

Darkness is a person/discoverer  
Beauty is an imagination fueler  
Beauty is a thought inspirer

Darkness and beauty are personified in this poem, as reflected in example (62):
Example 62:  
Wa-shaffa adduja ’an jamâlin ’amiqin yashibbu al-khayâla wa-yudhki al-fikr  
Darkness revealed a deep beauty  
that kindles the imagination and inspires thought  
Darkness is perceived as able to reveal beauty. Beauty is construed as being able to do things, such as kindle the imagination and inspire thought. Kindling the imagination and inspiring thought require special human skills.

The future is the work of magic/god is a magician

The future is expressed as the final work of magic. This is reflected in example (63):
Example 63:  
Wa-mudda ’ala al-kawni sîhrun gharib yuqarrifahu sâhirun muqtadir  
And over the world extends a marvelous magic, dispatched by an able magician.  
The bright future is expressed in terms of a cosmos/world covered by a marvelous magic. This magic is dispatched by a skillful magician.

Future is a soul  
A soul is a bird  
Good is light

The abstract concepts, future, soul, and good as conceptualized in terms of more concrete concepts, as reflected by example (64):
Example 64:  
Wa-rafrafa ruhun gharib al-jamâl bi- ajnîhatin min diyâyi al-qamar  
A soul of singular beauty flickered  
With wings from the moon’s luminosity  
The bright future is expressed in terms of a beautiful flickering soul. The soul is construed as having wings. Thus it can fly high to a better place where freedom and dignity exist. These wings are described as made of moonlight. In this line, the concept of LIGHT is associated with a positive world.

The future is a holy song  
The temple is a person/dreamer

In this poem, the future is expressed in terms of a holy song. The temple is described as a person. This is reflected in example (65):
Example 65:  
Wa ranna nashid al-hayât al-muqaddasi fi haikalîn ḥâlimin qad suhîr  
Life’s holy hymn resounded  
In a temple dreamy and enchanted  
The bright future is construed as a holy song. Here, the poet describes the positive change by using religious images, reflected in terms like “ranna” (ring), “nashid muqaddas” (sacred song), “haykal” (temple). The temple is personified by being described as a dreamer “ḥalîm”.

The abstract concepts, AMBITION, LIFE, and VICTORY, are expressed in terms of concrete entities. This is reflected in example (66):

Example 66:
Wa-a’lana fil kawni anna aṭṭumḥ lahỉbu al-ḥayāt wa-rūḥi
addaṭfar
And in the universe it declared: Aspiration
Is the flame of life and the essence of victory
Aspiration/ambition is expressed in terms of the flame of life and essence of victory. The abstract concept life is construed as fire. Victory is conceived of as a person, as having a soul.

The cognitive analysis of Abû Qāsem Echābī’s *The Will to Life* identified the following conceptual metaphors: life is a decision, destiny is a person, pain is darkness, traditions/colonization/constraints are a chain, life is a person, people are a liquid, nature is a person, breeze/clouds/stars/the moon are a person, the earth is a person/light is a person, sky/light/soil are objects, soil is a person/dreamer, time is a moving entity/winter is a moving entity, time is a person, time is a container/seasons are objects, dawn is a person, youth is an object, the future generations are seeds. Future generations are the reservoir of time, future generations are a season, seasons are a person, life is a person, life is a limited resource, evening is a magician/evening is a person, time is a container/autumn is sadness/seasons are objects, new life is the rebirth of new branches/time is a person, life is a person/spring is a person, darkness is a person/life is a person/youth is an object, the future is a dream, bright future is birdsong/fragrant flowers/fruit flavor, spring is a moving entity/spring is a song/spring is a person, spring is a person/the earth is a person/youth is a person/youth is a limited resource, spring is a person/life is an object/future generations are a treasure, dreams are a mountain/good is up/dignity/freedom is up, the earth is a person/light is a person/life is a person, future generations are dancers, bright future is sweet fruit and luscious flowers, future is a soul, the soul is a bird, good is light, the future is a holy song/the temple is a person/dreamer, hardships are fire/hardships are difficult paths, the struggle for freedom/dignity is mountain-climbing, good/decent life/dignity is up, ambition is a heart filled with the blood of youth, change is a wind that fills people’s chests, risk-taking is food/risks are mountains/risk-taking is climbing mountains, unambitious people are stones, the world/cosmos is a person, submission is death, freedom is up, submissive people are dead birds, submissive people are dead people, hope is light, sadness is a person, darkness is a person, death is a dream/dream is a star/dream is an object that can disappear, seeds are a person, longing is a plant/longing is a person, dreams are a person/worshippers/light is god/light is a person, beauty is an object/beauty is a person, existence is a person/life is a person, darkness is a person/discoverer, beauty is an imagination fueler, beauty is a thought inspirer, future is work of magic/god is a magician, future is a soul, soul is a bird, good is up, good is light, future is a holy song, the temple is a person/dreamer, ambition is flame/life is fire/victory is a person. The results will be discussed in the following section.

**Discussions**

Analysis of Abû Qāsem Echābī’s *The Will to Life* highlights several important points. First, the results corroborate the CMT claim that humans tend to understand abstract concepts through more concrete concepts. The TDs identified in this study, such as life, love, freedom, sadness, dignity, time, ambition, beauty, darkness, dreams, etc are understood and expressed through more concrete sds, such as a person, an object, spatial orientations, birds, etc. Second, analyzing this poem confirms Kövecses’s insistence on the importance of context in metaphor analysis. Kövecses asserts that “There is a variety of contextual factors that prime speakers when they use metaphors in communicative situations” (2019:1). He defines four types of context: situational, discourse, conceptual-cognitive, and global. It is clear that this poem is influenced and shaped by the context within which it is situated. For instance, the poet’s strong connection with nature shows that he was influenced by the European Romantic movement of the 18th and the 19th centuries. This poem is mainly composed of dialogues between the poet and elements of nature, such as the earth, darkness, nature, sky, etc. At a certain point, the poet is directly calling nature “Mother” (“um”). The themes evoked in the poem demonstrate that the poet was influenced by Romanticism. He talks about nature, freedom, a better world, individual emotions that speak on behalf of collective emotions. He expresses his longing for a better bright world that is different from the dark reality he is living in. The text is also influenced by the poet’s knowledge of Christianity. This explains the use of terms related to the Christian religion, such as “haykal” (temple),
“ranna” (ring), and “nashid muqaddas” (sacred song). In the same vein, it is clear that the socio-cultural context has influenced this poem which was written in 1930s Tunisia. The country was colonized by France at that time. Revolutionary movements were emerging throughout the country to combat colonization, such as the National Movement and Trade Unionism. This context might have fuelled the poet’s sense of freedom and revolution.

It can be noted that the bodily context has an impact on the poet’s choice of metaphors, as stated by Kövecses (2019), “a particular state or condition of the body can produce particular metaphorical conceptualizations in specific cases, such as the poet or the writer’s illness”. In fact, Echabi enjoyed “fragile health” causing his death later at the age of twenty-five years. He had serious problems with Zitouna University, which was a conservative School that fiercely criticized his poems in terms of form and content. Thus, when he begins the poem with “And the chains must be broken,” these chains might refer not only to French colonization, but also to the strict conservative beliefs and practices that existed in Tunisia in the 1930s. The poet believes that for a person to become free, they should free themselves from all types of social and cultural constraint. It can be argued that the poet’s conflicts with his illness and with Zitouna University might explain the bitter pessimism and intense negativity in his poem The Will to Life when referring to reality. It is clear that the poem refers to two worlds: the world he is longing for, and the real world in which he lives. When he talks about the world he longs for, the poet uses positive attributes such as “light,” “flagrant,” “lovely,” “longing,” “life,” “magic,” “dream,” “sing,” “birds,” “spring,” “sweet,” “stars,” etc. When he refers to reality, he utilizes negative attributes, such as “darkness,” “sadness,” “a curse,” “autumn,” “night,” “chain,” etc.

4 Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to identify the conceptual metaphors underlying Abû Qâsem Echâbi’s The Will to Life. The study was done within the theoretical framework of CMT as proposed by Lakoff, Johnson, Turner, and Kövecses. Semantic cognitive analysis of the poem identified the following conceptual metaphors: life is a decision, destiny is a person, pain is darkness, traditions/colonization/constraints are a chain, life is a person, people are a liquid, nature is a person, breeze/clouds/stars/the moon are a person, the earth is a person/light is a person, sky/light/soil are objects, soil is a person/dreamer, time is a moving entity/winter is a moving entity, time is a person, time is a container/seasons are objects, dawn is a person, youth is an object, the future generations are seeds. Future generations are the reservoir of time, future generations are a season, seasons are a person, life is a person, life is a limited resource, evening is a magician/evening is a person, time is a container/autumn is sadness/seasons are objects, new life is the rebirth of new branches/time is a person, life is a person/spring is a person, darkness is a person/life is a person/youth is an object, the future is a dream, bright future is birdsong/fragrant flowers/fruit flavor, spring is a moving entity/spring is a song/spring is a person, spring is a person/the earth is a person/youth is a person/life is an object/future generations are a treasure, dreams are a mountain/good is up/dignity/freedom is up, the earth is a person/light is a person/life is a person, future generations are dancers, bright future is sweet fruit and luscious flowers, future is a soul, the soul is a bird, good is light, the future is a holy song/the temple is a person/dreamer, hardships are fire/hardships are difficult paths, the struggle for freedom/dignity is mountain-climbing, good/decent life/dignity is up, ambition is a heart filled with the blood of youth, change is a wind that fills people’s chests, risk-taking is food/risks are mountains/risk-taking is climbing mountains, unambitious people are stones, the world/cosmos is a person, submission is death, freedom is up, submissive people are dead birds, submissive people are dead people, hope is light, sadness is a person, darkness is a person, death is a dream/dream is a star/dream is an object that can disappear, seeds are a person, longing is a plant/longing is a person, dreams are a person/worshippers/light is god/light is a person, beauty is an object/beauty is a person, existence is a person/life is a person, darkness is a person/discoverer, beauty is an imagination fueler, beauty is a thought inspirer, future is work of magic/god is a magician, future is a soul, soul is a bird, good is up, good is light, future is a holy song, the temple is a person/dreamer, ambition is flame/life is fire/victory is a person.

It can be argued that the study contributes to cognitive semantics in different ways. First, it provides evidence from a language other than English for the CMT claim that conceptual metaphor is pervasive in poetry. Turner & Lakoff (2009), have shown that the most famous English poems are based on conventional conceptual metaphors in which abstract concepts such as LOVE, LIFE, TIME, etc are construed through more tangible concepts, such as OBJECTS, SUBSTANCES, and CONTAINERS. The study’s results corroborate their claim about the pervasiveness of conceptual metaphor in Tunisian poetry by showing that Abû Qâsem Echâbi’s The Will to Life is based on conceptual metaphors in which target domains (TDs) are understood and construed in terms of source domains.

(SDs). Second, the study has corroborated Kövecses’s idea (2019) about the impact of context on the poet’s choice of metaphors. Analysis of The Will to Life has shown that Echabi was impacted by the socio-economic context of 1930s Tunisia when he wrote the poem. It is a vivid call to “break the chains/handcuffs” that hamper the people’s freedom. His longing for life and for freedom represents the collective longing of a whole nation that is suffering from colonial oppression and socio-economic obstacles. In the same vein, it is clear that the poet was impacted by the Romantic Movement. This is reflected in the frequent use of natural elements. For instance, he talks directly to nature, complaining to it about his sufferings and the hardships he is facing in the real world, as a son would usually do with his affectionate mother. Third, the study has shown that people—poets and non-poets alike—“live by metaphors”. Metaphor is pervasive in different discourses and in diverse genres, such as poetry.

The paper has some pedagogical implications. On the basis of the study’s results, EFL teachers may use the CMT approach to teach metaphors in class. For instance, they can present parts of Abū Qāsem Echabī’s The Will to Life and ask students to identify the conceptual metaphors underlying them. Teachers can also enhance students’ understanding of this poem on the basis of translation exercises. For instance, they can ask students to translate extracts from the poem, then compare the original text with the translated text in order to see whether the metaphors in the original text have been maintained or not. Another exercise that teachers can offer EFL students consists in identifying the cognitive mappings in the conceptual metaphors underlying this poem, such as time is a person, beauty is a person, hope is light, and life is a decision. This exercise would enhance the students’ understanding that a conceptual metaphor is based on cognitive mappings from the source domain onto the target domain. Thus, to understand a conceptual metaphor, we should understand the cognitive mappings that exist between the two conceptual domains. In other words, we should understand which elements of the source domain map onto elements of the target domain.

Conflict of interest statement
The author declared that she has no competing interest.

Statement of authorship
The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author has approved the final article.

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