

A Study of Metaphors in the Speech of Persian Language Students Based on a Cognitive Approach

Gholam Hassan Oraki *

Phd student of linguistics, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz Branch, Ahvaz, Iran

Mahmood Naghizadeh

Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, Payame Noor University, IR. Iran

Abstract

Metaphor is the most important linguistic phenomenon which has been noted by the scientists, philosophers, writers and recent linguists. The purpose of this research is to study the metaphors in the speaking of Persian language students in Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. To do so, the author has randomly selected fifty Persian speaker students and recorded thirty hours of their speech, presented in three different linguistic contexts. Writing out the linguistic data, 1,000 sentences were collected. Then, the data was analyzed on the base of the theoretical research and 122 metaphorical expressions were extracted. It was found that a significant part of the student's speech is metaphorical, and a variety of conceptual metaphors were seen. The structural metaphor had the highest frequency of occurrence and the orientational metaphor had the lowest frequency. Besides, whenever the linguistic context was formal, using the metaphor in language was less and whenever the linguistic context was informal, using metaphor in language was more. Accordingly, the metaphorical structures were higher in the third linguistic context while they were lower in the second linguistic context.

Keywords: metaphor, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors, Persian language

INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is a Greek word and its first meaning is carrying a container from one place to another. Before that linguists consider the metaphor, over the centuries it is considered as a figure of speech and sometimes the study of metaphor ended with describing the history of its formation. Metaphor in semantics is different from literature in two ways; firstly, metaphor as a figure of speech that is not intended to specific literary language, but belongs to the whole language. Secondly, unlike the tradition of literary studies that metaphor, in the vocabulary was limited but in this approach, metaphor can be considered as a cognitive process in language. For example in cognitive semantics explaining the sentences like: "He has been drowned in his thought" or "come out from

this thoughts". It is said that these sentences are represented according to "metal conceptual model" or "giving a name" [thought is an object with volume] in the frame of different linguistic structures. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have classified conceptual metaphors in three classes according to the features of the original field: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor and ontological metaphor in this article we try to express (explain) metaphor in daily speech of the speaking Persian language students Islamic Azad university in Ahwaz based on "the contemporary theory of metaphor" by Lakoff (1992) and the types of conceptual metaphor based on Lakoff and Johnson's classification (1980). Finally the efficiency of this approach is examined as one of scientific and new theory in cognitive semantics in Persian language according to data of the present research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Metaphor has been studied as one of the subject that made researchers to deal with in different fields of various sciences. In this point the first effective study has been done Aristotle. He has dealt with metaphor in two books named "art of poem" and "art of lecture". Ortony (1979) has said that Aristotle is the initiator of serious study in metaphor. Yusefi Rah and Golfam (2002) in definition of metaphor by Aristotle's points of view gathered from Ortony (1979) have said that Aristotle define metaphor as a kind of implicit comparison based on analogy. In his view metaphor is really a kind of abbreviated simile and it is a subject basically ornamental decorative.

In the literature field Abdolghafer Jorjani (1544 A.C) in the book named "Asrar Albalaghe" has presented the most accurate definition for metaphor. According to Jorjani opinion the relation of metaphor has not been made between phenomena that have no relation with each other but in establishing relation in metaphor, observation of superficial similarities is very important. (Shafiee Kadkani, 1987, p.110)

Traditional approach of the study of metaphor is formed by this studying, but the study of this subject has been done on the basis of recent approach in the frame of the cognitive semantics. The first study in this approach is the theory of George Lakoff (1992) termed as "The contemporary theory of metaphor". Accordingly, metaphor is very understanding and expressing abstract concepts in the frame of more observable concepts. Metaphors really represented a kind source - aim pattern. As a result they create a type of systematic and metaphoric relation between two abstract and concrete fields in Iran. Also researches as essays and thesis and mostly as interdisciplinary have been done about this approach.

Moshashae (2000) in his M.A thesis deals with metaphor of time in Persian and has studied kinds of conceptual metaphor by giving Persian examples. Golfam and others (2009) have written a research about studying metaphor in new poem on the basis of cognitive approach. They have concluded that in Forugh Farukhzad's poetry conventional metaphor of the time has been extended by accompanying with new features, create absolutely new metaphors.

Kurd Zaferanlou (1389) has written an essay with the topic "orientational Quranic metaphors" based on cognitive approach. She has in Quran language there are many valuable concepts goal field which can be evaluated and picture by copying source field on them. They are understandable by means of orientational metaphors.

Qaeminiya (2014) in a research with a topic as "the role of conceptual metaphors in religious thought" has analyzed the role and function of metaphor in creating new ideas and the conductive function of it. He has also dealt with the influence of metaphor on the Islamic idea and world seeing.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In cognitive semantic, metaphor as a means to organizing, processing and transferring information and representation of general concepts of categorizing, mechanism of processing and empirical and environmental influences have been studied. Metaphor is one of the key discussion in cognitive semantics. George Lakoff and Mark Jonson (1980) in the book "metaphor we live by" declared that the conceptual system of human mind which our idea and our behavior are based on them is inherently metaphoric. Finally George Lakoff (1992) introduced the "contemporary theory of metaphor" to complete his previous studies. This research has been done in the given theory. In this approach traditional studies of the metaphor have been challenged and the metaphor isn't considered as a conceptual system which is restricted to vocabulary and at the level of literal language but it is rooted in the image system of the human mind and has been done as a cognitive phenomenon which in that a kind of copying pattern from the concrete domain (source) to the abstract domain (target). Conceptual metaphors are those connect these fields of concepts. This copying of patterns allows metaphor to be the pattern to create new metaphor for example in the metaphor "thought is food" "thought" is conceptual domain and "food" is target domain. And conceptual of food is the source domain. In this metaphor, target field is understood from the source fields. What happened in conceptual metaphor is mapping of two fields.

In the other word if we have two sets with conceptual field, there are mapping between their elements. This mapping leads to utilize metaphoric sentences like "Ahmad swallowed the book" and "this ideas are digestible form". In general conceptual metaphor is said to understand one conceptual field according to another conceptual field in cognitive linguistics. Lakoff and Jonson (1980) have classified conceptual metaphor in to three groups that we briefly deal with them:

a) **Oriental metaphors:** are those which is formed on the basis of physical and cultural experiences. The basis of forming them are the situations such as "high-low", "inside-outside", "in front of – behind", "deep-shallow" and "central- environmental"

In Persian language metaphoric mapping like "It is very high" has created the following metaphoric sentences :

-The rate of inflation is very high (much)

- The fatness of my blood is very high(much)
- His bareness (tolerance) has increased (has become high)
- He is very conscious. (His conscious is very high)

These sentences are based on the above mapping, originating from human life experience, are created in our daily language.

b) Existential metaphor (the study of existence): in this metaphor, we understand our experiences and concepts in the form of independent objects and material. Because of this forming these metaphors our mind conceptualize abstract concepts and phenomenon in form parts and materials, two distinguishable samples of these metaphors are the metaphors for container and life-bestowing. In the example like "The cancer has got his life" understanding the abstract concept (cancer) has happened by means of relationship with human features.

c) Structural metaphor (occurrence structure): they are metaphors that a concept is understood an experienced on the basis of other concept.

In the other word in this metaphor a concept is expressed in the frame of another concept. The exact structural of concepts which are in the source field are reflected into the structural concept in target field and then a kind of copying between two fields are done like the following samples:

- The time is gold (precise)
- The job is eternal capital
- This world is inn

In the all cases mentioned about there is a kind of relation between two fields are seen . the abstract concepts like " time " , " job" and " world " are understood by copying from empirical and sensible concepts such as "gold ," capital " and " inn (carvansara)

DATA ANALYSIS

The writer used Lakoff's "contemporary theory of metaphor" to show the occurrences of different types of conceptual metaphors in the utterances among Persian language speaking students, randomly chose fifty students of Ahvaz faculty of humanities.

By recognizing and controlling statistic sample have recoded 30 hours of the student's speech during 3 months in the following three contexts:

- a) The first context: student's sympathy and conversation with each other at the end of exam.
- b) The second context: student's sympathy and conversation with their professor in classroom.

c) The third context: student's sympathy and conversation with each other during free time in their dormitory.

The writer in continuing typed the recorded speech (utterances) in the three contexts as written texts contain 1000 sentences; then by his intuition and Liberian study chose about 122 metaphoric expressions. Finally the giving expressions according to compare and fit them with Lakoff classifications of metaphor and determining the amount of frequency of occurrence them in the given students. Here we briefly analyzed and describe some of them. It should be noted that some metaphoric mapping are cultural especial and happening many of metaphoric expressions in speech society and statistic.

Research made possible, in the following we note some of them: metaphoric copping like "the heart is a place" made possible several metaphoric expression in student's utterances as follow:

-My heart is tenably narrow. (the third context)

-There isn't anything is my heart (the third context)

-You are my heart (the third context)

The metaphoric copying "The heart is human" causes occurrences of many metaphoric expressions as :

-My heart went thousands ways. (the third context)

-Persuade his heart. (the third context)

Another metaphoric copying like " human is as a system " creates the following expressions in the given statistic society:

-It's wire completely mixed up. (the third context)

-Your Two -Rials have not been placed (the third context)

-We will be confused (mixed up) (the third context)

-The metaphoric copying "The heart is a mirror" created some metaphoric as following:

My heart has gotten leggings (the third context)

My heart has broken. (The third context)

It became clear, by the study and analysis of linguistic data, that metaphoric copying (time as place) creates happing sentences

Like the following samples:

We have much time until the results (the first context)

In this expression the concept of time as a place considered fixed so that the speaker is moving towards that place. In other word, time of the announcing results of the exam in the lace frame that the given students show they are metaphorically researching to that place:

-Excuse me professor! We don't have much time to the end of the term. (the second context)

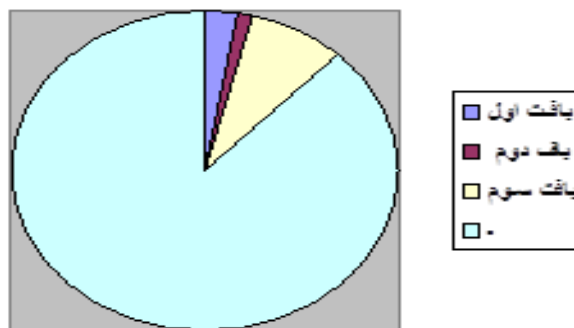
In near future, all problems will be solved (the third context)

-Those days has passed any more.

Although Lakoff considered the metaphor "time as a place" has two cases: in the first cases the person is constant and time is Moving; in the second cases "time is considered as constant point in a place and the person is moving toward it. in the third case" both time and the time precede the person." this sentence occurred in statistic society in the frame of this expression: " We were postponed from life."

Charts

Figure 1 Cyclic (percentage) chart show the amount of metaphoric speeches (122sentences) in three context of research in relation with the whole recorded speech in the statistic research sample (1000 linguistic data). The first context (2/9%), the second context (1/1%), the third context (8/2%).



As you observe the most metaphoric structures among student's speech are happened in the third context which their relationships between them are sincere and informal.

Figure 2 Contains: cyclic and columnar charts show the amount of occurrences of different types of metaphor with their different frequencies in the whole recorded speech of the statistic research society.

Occurrence structure metaphor (3/3%), Structural metaphor (3%), Existential metaphor (2/7%), Orientational metaphor (0/8%), The proverbs (2/4%).

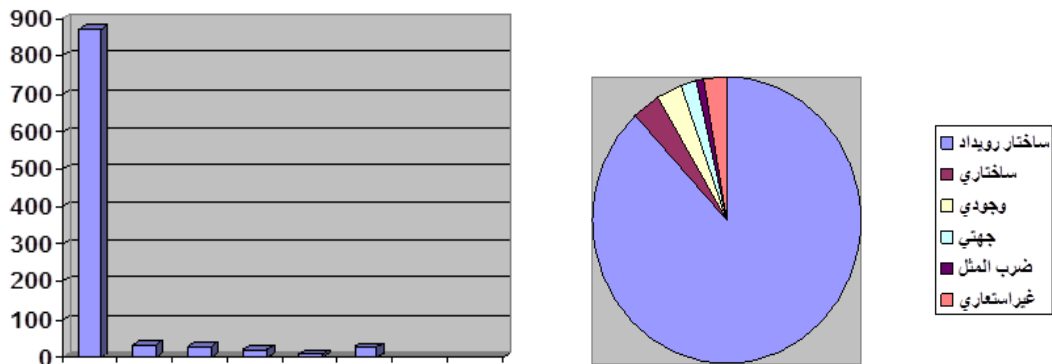
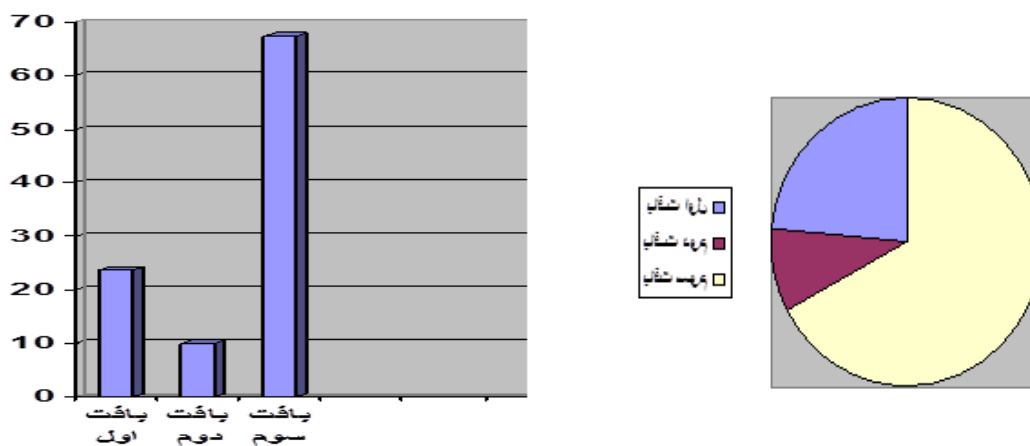


Figure 3 Contains cyclic and columnar chart show the amount of the occurrence of the metaphoric speech (122 sentences) in statistic society of research on three kinds of contexts in relation with the whole metaphoric speech of them. The first context (23/7%), the second context (0/9%), the third context (67/3%).



CONCLUSION

From all of student's recorded utterances in 30 hours about 122 expressions were metaphoric, this means that about 12/2 of the whole speech of statistic society are metaphoric. We concluded that we have different metaphors according to Lakoff's classifications (1980) such as: orientational, existential and structural metaphors. According to "the contemporary theory of metaphor" the most frequent metaphor is structural metaphor in the given statistic society. Of course there were a lot of idioms, proverb and typical expressions in their speech.

Now, we study the frequency of each type of metaphor: from all of metaphoric speech (12/2); orientational metaphor include 8 expressions, (0/8 percent), existential (personalization) with 27 expressions (2/7 percent), structural metaphor with 30 expressions (3 percent), the metaphor of structure occurrence with 33 expressions (3/3 percent) proverbs and typical expressions and idioms with 24 numbers (2/4 percent). As you see the metaphor of occurrence structure has the most frequency and the orientational metaphor has the least frequency.

In 122 expressions in the three contents are as follows ; in the first context 29, in the second 11, and in the third context 82 expressions ,we can these numbers according to the percentage: 2/9percent in the first, 1/1 in the second and 8/2 in the third context are metaphoric. Here we can generalize the general principles on the basis of the given statistic data:

1. The research statistic society enjoy from the metaphor process in their speech so this is true about other Persian speakers.

2.The giving statistic society has expressed most of his /her concepts by means of the metaphor of occurrence structure; since Lakoff studies has been especially done on English language ;but he believes that this kind of metaphor is universal so his ideas is true about Persian language .

3.According to Lakeoff's classification of metaphor (1980) all kind of conceptual metaphor has been used in the research, so it can be said that in Persian language all kind of conceptual metaphor has been used .

4. Since the application of proverbs and typical expression and idiom have great influence on address and facilitate transferring the subject, the given students use them a lot, and this is true about all Persian speakers.

5. Linguistic context has direct effect on the usage of metaphor in speech; in other word the more formal context the less application of metaphor and receivers. In this research utilization of metaphor in the third context is more, because in the third context there are friendly relations and lovely atmosphere .the least application was in the second context because their relation were formal not metaphoric.

6. Since in all kinds of conceptual metaphor, a concept is understood on the basis of other concept, it seems that Lakoff's classification of conceptual metaphor is a formal grouping ,because the division of metaphor from each other is to somewhat difficult.

7. In analyzing linguistic data became clear that Lakoff and Jonson's container metaphor have common field with subdivision of copying metaphor [cases are place] in other word the concept of these metaphor are the same of or example the expression produced in the first context "you felt in trouble" is a container metaphor of existential metaphor; because the student for "trouble" accept containment (volume) or inside and outside. In other words "trouble" is a state which through place used as metaphor by the speakers.

8. Since according to the contemporary theory of metaphors proverbs and idioms are part of metaphor. It seems that these linguistic categories are members of dead metaphor.

9. The study of linguistic data for this research shows that some metaphoric copyings are outside of the statistic society and were especially cultural. They are in the speaker's mind so this copying is understandable only by the writer's institution.

REFERENCES

- Afrashi, A. (2000). An introduction to the process of forming metaphor, *Conversation Culture* (Vol.2). [In Persian].
- Ghasemzadeh, H. (2000). *Metaphor and Cognition*. Tehran : Culture Press. [In Persian]
- Heidaritabrizi, H. (2001). Translation of metaphor based on lakoff & Jonson theory. *Translator*(Vol.35) [in Persian].
- Yousefirah, F. (2003). *The study of time metaphor in the Persian language*. M.A thesis.
- Havaks, T. (1998). *Metaphor*. Taheri ,F. (Translator).Tehran: Center Press [in Persian].
- Lakoff. G., & mark, J.(1980). *Metaphors we Live By*. Chicago: university of Chicago press.
- Lakoff. G. (2003). *After wards of Metaphor we Live by*. Unpublished article California: university of California at Berkeley.
- Lakoff, G. (1992).*The contemporary theory of Metaphor*. In Andrew ortony (ed). *Metaphor and thought*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women ,Fire and Dangerous Things : What Categories Reveal About the Mind* . Chicago : University of Chicago press.
- Mousavifaridani, A. (2003). *Critical study of Metaphor with special Reference to Lakoffian Analysis*. Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished) university of Poona.
- Mron, R. (1989). Seeing and believing, metaphor, image, and force. *Critical inquiry*,16,87-112.
- Ortony, A. (ed). (1979). *Metaphor and thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- Safavi, K. (2000). *An introduction to the semantics*: Tehran: Art field, Islamic art and culture [in Persian].
- Shamisa, S. (2003). *The new view to rhetoric* .Tehran: Ferdous.