"RecognisingAnd Comprehending Metaphor in Media Political Report:A Cognitive Study"

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Abstract

This work discusses the problematic areas in recognising and comprehending metaphor in media political reports . It is based on what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) called " Conceptual Metaphor". The researchers have selected some extracts from political reports and tried to investigate the metaphorical expressions in these extracts. The hypothesis of the study states that there are some points of difficulty in recognising and comprehending metaphor by non-native speakers of English. In addition, there are some metaphorical expressions which can be recognised and comprehended more easily than others. This is because not all people are alike in their linguistic competence. It is one of the findings of the study that linguistic experience plays a crucial role in metaphor recognition and comprehension. The study covers a number of political reports written on different occasions, and the informants have been requested to recognise and interpret the metaphorical expressions which may be found in these reports. Meanwhile, a well- educated native speaker has been requested to respond to the same test items and his response has been used as the norm. By comparing these responses to those of the non-native informants, it has clearly shown that it is possible to diagnose the points of difficulty in metaphor recognition and comprehension, by non-native informants.

The study has mainly concentrated on the role of the academic rank of the informants in metaphor recognition and comprehension. The variable of academic rank can be used to trace the linguistic experience each informant has. Therefore, it has been found out that informants with the academic rank of professorship have scored higher than other informants who are of less academic ranks, and so on.

1. Introduction

1.1 Preliminaries

Human language is a very complex set of symbols which are combined in a systematic way so as to convey the intended message. The most obvious characteristic that is peculiar to human language is its creativity. It is believed by some linguists that some animals have their own 'languages' by which they can communicate with each other but what differentiates animal language from that of human is the creativity of the latter. While animals use a very limited set of symbols to communicate, people are free, to some extent, in combining the language symbols that are available to them. One aspect of creativity of human language is to say something while intending another. Human beings can employ what words can mean and not only what these words do mean. One of the manifestations of language creativity is the use of metaphor.

Metaphor is a comparison between two ideas or things that may not be alike in some features but are still alike in one important feature (Al-Bazi, 2001:2). Moreover, metaphor has been traditionally looked at, as "an anomaly, an unusual or deviant way of using language " (Goatly, 1997:1). In this view, metaphor has been confined to literature and art only. Recent studies have shown that " metaphor is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people, not just by special talented people " (Kovecses, 2002: viii). Thus, the recent view to metaphor asserts that not only is it used by poets or literary writers, but also, in everyday life, by ordinary people.

The study presents an account of the notion of metaphor, its nature and significance in media political reports and investigates the way political metaphor is recognised and comprehended by the instructors of the Departments of English and Translation at the College of Arts, as well as the

Department of English, College of Education, University of Basra.

This study also tackles the various uses of metaphor in political reports. Politicians as well as political reporters tend to use metaphor in their writings for a number of purposes. In elections, politicians use metaphors " to evoke emotions, reinforce specific platform, attack opponents, and manipulate the electorate" (Lin, 2009: 2). In this respect, politicians have their own ways to manage metaphors in political discourse.

Metaphor is a special literary and linguistic device which has a special semantic value in certain situations. Users of metaphors, whether native or non-native, have to pay special attention to the fact that a literal interpretation of metaphor is useless and cannot convey the same effect on the receiver. Thus, language users have to try their best while interpreting metaphors, or else there will be some missing factors in the message that contains that metaphor. Since media reports are rich in metaphorical expressions, such interpretation problems will be inevitable and therefore language users should find the best linguistic solution to recognise and interpret metaphors.

Moreover, there is a difference between understanding metaphors and understanding the literal meaning of sentences. The former is a more complex process than the latter. Meanwhile, not all metaphors are alike in complexity, i.e. there are some metaphors that can be comprehended and realised more easily than others.

1.2 Theory and Model

The notion of metaphor has been studied by many scholars through different points of view . Al-Bazi (op.cit. :7) states that "through metaphor , one can speak of X as though it were Y , as it is the case in the sentence 'Oliver is a rabbit'". This model , which Al-Bazi mentions, relies on the idea of comparison and similarity to show the notion of metaphor . Such models take into consideration the idea that in metaphor, there are two meanings which are interacted to

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produce the resultant metaphor. However , this study relies on the pragmatic theory of metaphor , i.e. the importance of the context in recognising and comprehending metaphorical expressions . This idea has been supported by Searle who believes that pragmatics can shed more light on the interpretation of metaphorical expressions.

1.3 Objectives

The study aims at surveying the nature of metaphor as a literary and linguistic device, and pin pointing the most problematic areas in recognising and interpreting the metaphorical expressions which are frequently used in the language of the internet, journalism and media. Therefore , it aims at enabling the reader to comprehend and to overcome the difficulties that s/he may face when dealing with political reports.

1.4 Hypothesis

It is hypothesised that there exist some recognition and interpretation problems of metaphors in media political reports and these problems are attributed to the complicated nature of metaphor. Most of language users tend to misinterpret some metaphorical expressions and recognise the explicit meaning of the words that constitute the metaphor rather than looking at the metaphor as one unit.

1.5 Procedure , Tools, and Data

The researchers have selected a number of English extracts form the BBC multilingual website, The Washington Post newspaper, and Al-Jazeera English TV. These extracts have been chosen due to the frequent use of metaphor which is found in them. The study highlighted the problematic areas the receiver is likely to face when trying to recognise and comprehend such metaphorical expressions . This work will be as a guidance to those working in the field of media reports interpretation so that

they can get back to it whenever they face an interpretation problem .

The instructors of the College of Arts and the College of Education, University of Basra have been provided with some extracts that contain metaphorical expressions and they have been requested to underline the expressions that they would think metaphorical as well as to give appropriate interpretations for these expressions. The results of the test are useful in pin pointing the problematic areas in comprehending and recognising metaphors.

2- Language and Politics

2.1Introduction

Politics is mainly viewed in terms of struggle for power in order to secure some ideas and interests and put them into practice. This is always clear between political parties and it is obvious that language, here, plays a crucial role in achieving the speaker's goals. Therefore, those who are concerned with political discourse on the one hand, and linguists, and discourse analysts, on the other hand, try to concentrate on so many aspects when studying the relationship between language and politics. Also, they have put many theories and methods in their attempts to do so (Schäffner, 1997:1). Politicians are mostly interested in the political decisions and realities in society and the actions that lead to such decisions. Linguists, on the other hand, are mainly concerned with the linguistic phenomena that exist in the political discourse and which are relevant to the political issue being discussed.

2.2 Political Language

Politics is defined differently by different scholars and politicians. Chilton (2004:2) quotes that politics "is viewed as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it ". Thus, Politics is concerned with power; the power to make

decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behaviour, and to control their values. Therefore, the language used in the political reports, whether used by politicians or by ordinary people , must have some characteristics that differentiate it from other types of language. This is because politicians always have their own points of view, ideologies and political agendas that they always adopt in their writings and speeches. Besides, sometimes, politicians use language for the sake of persuasion and justification. Therefore, the language of politics always contains some figurative aspects that are not found when writing for other purposes. In this respect, politicians choose their words very carefully because they believe in "the power of language to influence thought" (Joseph, 2006:16).

Furthermore, we can notice that there are certain characteristics of the language of politics. Jabboori (op.cit :39) states that

> politically, there are two types of communication. The first is the ' internal political communication' when politicians speak to each other. The second is the 'external political communication' when politicians speak to the audience throughout their speeches or writings in the mass media.

However, in both types, the language of political discourse is full of persuasion. It is also noticed that the language used by politicians is used as a weapon that may be utilized to gain some political supports. Therefore, the readers of political reports may not depend on the denotational meaning of what is written in an attempt to comprehend them. Rather, they should take into consideration what the words imply, i.e., the connotational meaning. Political reporters may also make use of metaphor in their writings. In doing so, the language of politics becomes more effective and persuasive.

Therefore, there appear to be some problems in recognising and comprehending metaphorical expressions in political reports. The reader must recognise that in using metaphor, political reporters tend to compare two completely different things or ideas which still share some similar features. Therefore, political language has not to be rendered depending on understanding the literal meanings of the words.

Similarly, Al-Sa'idi (2008:15) describes politics as being "a kind of cooperation for resolving clashes of interests over money, power, liberty and so on ". These clashes can be resolved through the smart use of language and through manipulating as many techniques as the writer has at hand. She goes on stating that among these ways there exist persuasion, rational argumentation , irrational strategies , threats , and anything the politician thinks will work .Thus, language is the only means by which all these actions can be achieved easily.

2.3 Metaphor

2.3.1 Definitions

Al-Bazi (op. cit. :7) discusses the origin of the word 'metaphor' by stating that " the term metaphor is taken from the Greek word 'metaphora', which is derived from ' meta' , meaning 'over ' and 'phorein' meaning 'to carry ' " . She has also stated that the oldest theory of metaphor is the Comparison or Similarity Theory (ibid: 8). We say of X as being Y, though X and Y are different in most of the features but still share one fundamental feature and for this shared feature the two notions are compared.

The notion of metaphor has been dealt with by many scholars and linguists. Yet, the definition of the term is still a debatable issue. 'Metaphor'is a figure
of speech in which people understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. "A typical metaphor is a mapping between a better-known, more concrete

conceptual domain , the 'source domain', and the conceptual domain which it helps to organize ,the 'target domain' " (Crystal, op. cit :98). Thus, a metaphorical expression such as:

(1) Your theories lack foundation,

is built upon the conceptual metaphor of 'Theories are Buildings' in which there is a physical, concrete object as a source domain, and an abstract mental entity as a target domain. We talk about two things as being similar in one important quality. Cameron and Low (1999:8) believe that "metaphor is a mental phenomenon, sometimes manifested in language sometimes in gesture or in graphic form". In other words, metaphor is not restricted to linguistic pieces only, it can also occur in gestures andsome of the other non-linguisticactivities.

Moreover, Saffer (2005:4) defines metaphor as "a linguistic, visual or auditory construct in which one thing, the referrer or source, refers to another, the subject or target". According to this definition, metaphor can make the view of the abstract ideas clearer by comparing them to more concrete terms because those terms are obvious and clear to the language users than the abstract ones.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:4) found out that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action". They argue that human beings live by metaphor which constitutes their ordinary conceptual system which is fundamentally metaphorical. This view of looking at metaphor has proven itself to be true. Metaphor can never be an issue of words only and it is not simply a borrowing of some strange words instead of thenormal words. It has been found out that metaphoris a conceptual issue which is involved in man's everyday life.

Simply speaking , metaphor is " a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another by saying that one is the other"(Kovecses op. cit.:vi) , for example ,

(2) He is a lion,

in which 'He' is compared to a lion in that both of them are brave. Mostly, the two compared items are not similar in most of the features but in one. In the above example, 'he' and 'a lion' are not alike in most of their features except bravery.

However, the Comparison or Similarity Theory has been criticized and was found deficient in covering all the types of metaphor. Therefore, the Interaction Theory was introduced. It suggests that it is not a matter of comparison that makes up the metaphor. Rather , in metaphor "we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word , or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction " (Al-Bazi, op. cit. :9) .

2.3.2 Theories

A) The Interaction Theory

It was first advocated by I.A.Richards (1936) and then developed by Max Black (1962). It has two main suggestions. Firstly, it asserts that metaphor has an irreducible cognitive meaning and, secondly, this irreducible cognitive meaning is the result of the interaction of different cognitive systems. Furthermore, the interactionists state that the cognitive meaning of metaphor can be true even if it is not amenable to literal expression. (Reimer & Camp, 1988).

Speedling (2004:6) states that "[M]etaphor is not simply the substitution of one concept or image for another." Instead, it creates a new meaning which is affected by merging two distinct meanings. He goes on describing metaphor by stating that metaphor is more than a linguistic device, "it is a mode of thinking and a method of interpreting reality" (ibid).

Most of the recent works and researches on metaphor focus on cognitive metaphor which has been dealt with in 1980 by Lakoff and Johnson. They stress that "the way we

talk about abstract domains appears to be systematically structured by the way we talk about certain more concrete domains" (Lakoff and Johnson, op. cit. :18). Therefore, we tend to talk about life, arguments and theories in the same way by which we talk about buildings or journeys. This idea is built on the main idea of metaphoricity, i.e. the idea of comparison.

For Bowdel and Gentner (2009:45), metaphor establishes mappings between concepts from desperate domains of knowledge. For example, in the metaphor 'The mind is a computer', 'The mind', an abstract entity, is described in terms of a complex electronic device, a computer. It is widely believed that metaphor is a major source of knowledge change, and a great deal of research has examined how metaphors can enrich and illuminate concepts that would otherwise remain vague or ambiguous.

B) Structure Mapping Theory

Metaphor is traditionally seen as a comparison between two terms, namely, the target domain and the base domain. According to earlier points of view, metaphors are seen by means of a simple feature-matching process. It is the structure mapping theory that does well in explaining the mechanism of metaphor comprehension (Forceville, 1996:13). According to this theory, when one tries to interpret metaphor, there will be two types of interrelated mechanism: alignment and projection (ibid: 14).

According to the alignment process, each object of one representation can be placed in correspondence with one object of the other representation. Arguments of aligned relations are, then, aligned. Once a structurally consistent match between the target and base domains has been found, further predicates from the base that are connected to the common system can be projected to the target as candidate inferences.

Thus, according to the structure mapping theory , there is a system of relations holding between the base objects and they are also holding between the target objects regardless of whether the base and target objects are similar or not. Thus, the metaphor ,

(3) Socrates was a midwife ,

shows some systematic relational similarities between Socrates and the midwife although they are originally different. Both Socrates and a midwife help others produce something, the former helps his student produce ideas, and the latter helps a mother produce a baby.

C) The Substitution Theory

One way of investigating and understanding the nature of metaphor is the traditional theory of substitution or transfer. The etymological meaning of the word metaphor is very close to the function metaphor does according to this approach , " the Greek prefix metá- often conveys an idea of change, and -phor is from a Greek verb phérein 'to carry, bear'" (Knowles and Moon, 2006 :51). According to this theory, people comprehend metaphor

through realising that there is a secondary meaning for the metaphorical expression which substitutes for another expression with a literal meaning. Knowles and Moon (ibid) cited an example that can explain this theory. In

(4) We used to thrash all the teams in the Keith Schoolboy League. We had a great squad and no-one could touch us,

the metaphor in the word thrash can substitute a more literal word such as defeat. Therefore, defeat has a literal meaning, and thrash has a literal and a metaphorical meaning too. When used metaphorically, the word thrash can be substituted for the word defeat. This theory can explain, to some extent, how some metaphorical expressions are comprehended and realized. Yet , there are

some other theories which provide a more acceptable justification of metaphor recognition and comprehension (ibid).

D) Blending Theory

The notion of conceptual metaphor which was founded by Lakoff and Johnson 1980 has contributed greatly to the general understanding of the nature of metaphor and there have been many researches and studies which concentrated on this theory. However, there appeared a more recent approach that "seeks to explain much of the same linguistic data, and also to unify the analysis of metaphor with the analysis of a variety of other linguistic and conceptual phenomena" (Grady, et al. 1999:2). There are some various shared features between these two approaches to metaphor in that they both look at metaphor as a conceptual and cognitive rather than a purely linguistic phenomenon. Moreover, both theories involve "systematic projection of language, imagery and inferential structure between conceptual domains; both propose constraints on this projection; and so forth " (ibid).

Blending theory was originated in the late 1980's by the work of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner. Its main concern is to explain the main mental processes which are involved in the comprehension of metaphor. An important concept in the blending theory is the mental space. According to this theory, when people process a piece of language, they create a space in their minds into which "go all the pieces of information and conceptual knowledge that are needed to process the ideas contained in that bit of language" (Knowles and Moon, op. cit. :57). This will be only the information that is relevant to the context and not all what is known.

E) Conceptual Metaphor Theory

It is Lakoff and Johnson (op. cit.) who state that all of us, and not only poets, use metaphor in our daily life

whether we realize it or not. Moreover, they state that we even live by metaphor. This recent view of metaphor, called the conceptual metaphor, suggests that metaphors structure our perceptions and understanding. They also state that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action"(ibid: 4).By this, they mean that metaphor is not associated with language only. Rather, it is related to our thought, perception and cognition. Cineki (2008: 239) states that

CMT [Conceptual Metaphor Theory] builds on the premise that

manyexpressions in everyday language reflect deep-seated

ways of characterising one conceptual domain, often a more

abstract notion , in terms of a different domain , one which is

often more closely related to our physical,embodied experience.

Thus, in CMT, we talk about two domains; the source and the target domain. For example, 'Time Is Money', as cited in Lakoff and Johnson , is a conceptual metaphor using the target domain, Time, and the source domain, Money. We say, for instance, 'spending too much time', 'wasting time', or 'how much time' as though we are speaking of 'money'.

Therefore, in this metaphor, there is a partial mapping between the two notions of 'time' and 'money'.

The most important assertion of Lakoff and Johnson (op.cit. : 6) is that metaphor is not merely a linguistic issue. They state that

the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and
defined . Metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely
because there are metaphors in a person's conceptual system .

The essence of metaphor, they assert, is to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another. In 'argument is war' metaphor, 'argument' is

understood in terms of 'war' ideas. The concept of 'war' has many similarities with that of 'argument' such as 'defending someone's idea, considering that who is arguing as an enemy, losing or winning an argument'. Therefore,Lakoff and Johnson look at metaphor as something essential in everyday life, something that cannot be ignored.

Lakoff and Johnson also mention that conceptual metaphors are not arbitrary cases. There is some sort of systematicness in understanding and comprehending this kind of metaphor. This means that people understand a specific metaphor, such as 'Death is a Departure' in terms of some shared experience (ibid: 8).They are systematic in that there is a fixed correspondence between the structure of the domain to be understood, i.e.,'death ' and the structure of the domain in terms of which the first domain is to be understood, i.e. ' departure ' . The process of understanding these domains is almost automatic in our cognition although sometimes there is attention to be paid .

2.4. The importance of Metaphor

Knowles and Moon (ibid: 3) discuss the importance of metaphor in language. This importance comes in two ways: firstly, metaphor "is a basic process in the formation of words and word meanings" (ibid). There are some words that take their meanings through metaphor, i.e. the concepts and meanings are lexicalized, to use Knowles and Moon's words, through metaphor. In this case, some words are extended to mean some other concepts and ideas through using metaphor. This is an obvious case in English as in the following examples:

(5) She has published extensively in the field of psychology.

(6) The failure has hurt him deeply (ibid).
  'Field' and 'hurt' have some other senses some of which are metaphors of different kinds. Similarly, there are many new concepts which borrow their names from some

metaphorical or pre-existing words such as the computer terms like 'web', 'bug' and 'virus'.

The second importance of metaphor in language is that in discourse , "metaphor is important because of its functions- explaining , clarifying , describing , expressing , evaluating and entertaining " (ibid). This means that metaphor is used in discourse not because there is no other way of saying what we want to say. Rather, we tend to use metaphorical expressions to explain our idea and intention, to describe what we want to say, to express better what an idea is, and to make our message conveyed in a more interesting and amusing way. Knowles and Moon (ibid: 4) mention that through the use of the 'fight' and

war' metaphor, students can better understand the idea of the process of cells reaction to infection. Thus, when given this example:

(7) Scientists believe stress may suppress development of T-cells, the white blood cells which help to fight off invading micro-organisms (ibid),

students can understand the process of the body cells reaction to infection .

Moreover, Mestriner and Martins (2010) in their paper entitled "The Importance of Metaphor on Bush's Speech: An Analysis Using Corpus Linguistics ", explain how metaphor is influential in the presidential speeches of George Bush. Through metaphor, the reader can infer the ideology from Bush's speech and can attribute meanings to his actions. Martins and Martins (ibid) adopt Lakoff and Johnson's (op. cit.:45) view of metaphor that metaphor is "infiltrated in the daily life , not only in the daily language but also in the thoughts and actions ".

What's more, the use of metaphor by someone uncovers how this person looks at the world, i.e., it reflects his world view.

2.5 Personification

Personification is a device in which a physical object is given some human features . In personification , " words that have the semantic component ' not human ' , have this suppressed so that these words are allowed to function in sentences as though they were human "(ibid: 174). This device allows people to comprehend some features of non-human objects in terms of some human features . For example , we say that

(8) life has cheated me (ibid : 33) .

In this example , life which is inanimate has been described as though it were human because it is humans who cheat .

Hurford , et al (2007:337) defines personification as " a particular type of ontological metaphor in which an abstract entity is construed as though it were a physical object which is then further specified as being a person". For example ,

(9) That theory explains everything you need to know about metaphor,

is a personification in which theory is given human features . It is known that literally, a theory can never explain, people only can explain but this
metaphor will enable us to understand the idea that through this theory , one can know the ideas about the subject of metaphor . Thus, theory is viewed as though it were a person who can explain to others the principles of metaphor.

Moreover, personification is used extensively in literature. This aspect can be seen through the extensive use of the conceptual metaphor Time Is A Person. Time is being personified in many ways that can be seen in the literature of many writers. For example, we can see that timeis pictured

as a thief in Milton's Sonnet # 7 (Kovecses, op. cit. :49) through these lines:

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,

Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth years!

Also , time is described as a reaper in Shakespeare's sonnet # 116 (ibid) :

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come,

or the implicit meaning .

2.6 Metaphor and Politics

Throughout history , metaphorical expressions have played an important role in the speech and writings of politicians. Pikalo (2008: 41) states that in order to understand the nature of metaphor in the political discourse , there should be a clear answer to the question of the distinction between the literal and metaphorical meanings of political concepts. This idea leads to a traditional question which is ' what is the difference between the literal and the non-literal meaning and how can the latter be comprehended or predicted?

Literal meaning is a property of linguistic expressions . Roughly speaking, the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meanings of its constituents as well as the grammatical relations that hold between these constituents . It is called , by some linguists, the linguistic meaning . Thus, the linguistic meaning of an expression is " the meaning ormeanings of thatexpressionin the language " (Akmajian , et al 2001: 229). To illustrate, the linguistic meaning of a sentence like:

(10) The door is behind you.

is the compositional meaning of what each word in this sentence means. This sentence could be a suitable answer, for example, to a question like:

(11) Where is the door?

and the speaker / writer is trying to show the questioner where the door is.

Moreover, it is the literal meaning of an utterance that decides whether the utterance is true or not . This idea is very crucial in the legal contracts . It is the literal meaning of the legal contract that is looked at when there is a dispute about its items and not to what somebody thinks an item may refer to. Of course, words can mean something else other than their linguistic , or literal meanings and this is the other type of meaning which is the non-literal

Jabboori (op. cit. : 39) states that political discourse can be divided into two main types : internal and external. Politicians may speak to each other, when discussing some issues that are related to their own politicalaffairs.Thisis called the internal political discourse . But there is the external political discourse where politicians speak to the audience and in this type, metaphor has a special impact. When speaking to the audience, politicians tend to use some expressions that are persuasive and figurative. They try to put the most suitable words in their suitable positions in texts. Therefore, they look at how some words may affect and support their ideas more than others ,i.e. they look at the way a message can be better conveyed rather than what the message is. He quotesNewmark's words which state that metaphors are used in politics " to appeal to the sense , to interest , to clarify 'graphically ' , to please , to delight , to surprise " (op. cit. : 44) . In this, Jabboori refers to the so-called pragmatic function of metaphor.

2.7 Metaphor in Political Discourse

Traditional studies of metaphorical expressions in political discourse have paid little attention to the impact of metaphor in political discourse. Even though, it had been mentioned that metaphor is dangerous in leading the human mind into intellectual and political confusion:

> …..**The Light of human minds is perspicuous words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; [. . .] And on the contrary, Metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like ignesfatui; and reasoning upon them, is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; antheir end, contention, and sedition, or contempt (Musolff, 2004: 1).**

This view has been changed recently especially by the researches of the school of cognitive metaphor analysis which Lakoff and Johnson founded by the publication of their book*Metaphors We Live By*(1980) and so, the role metaphor plays in political discourse has been viewed as positive. Lakoff and Johnson stress that "metaphors play a central role in the construction of social and political reality" (ibid:159). From the cognitive point of view , " what matters most about a metaphor is its conceptual nature , not its 'accidental' linguistic form " (ibid:1). This viewpoint is very decisive in that it focuses on the cognitive mental nature of metaphor more than its linguistic form. In this, if our social experiences and conceptualizations are organized in terms of metaphors, then politics, as part of the social domain, must also be constructed metaphorically.

2.8 Metaphor and Foreign Policies

Politics in general is rich with conceptual metaphor. For example, Kovecses (op. cit. :62) , asserts that the American politics is highly influenced by the following metaphors: Politics Is War; Politics Is Business; Society Is a Family; Society Is a Person; and The Presidential Election Is a Race. He goes on to explain that by the Politics Is War metaphor, American society can be seen as groups of armies that correspond to the political parties. The leaders

of the armies correspond to the leaders of the political parties, and the weapons which are used by the armies are those ideas and ideologies undertaken by the political parties. Moreover, the goal of the war corresponds to the goals of the political parties for which they conflict with each other. These kinds of metaphor are used widely through media and by politicians themselves.

2.9 Comprehension

There have been many attempts at getting a clear and thorough definition to the notion of comprehension. However, it is not an easy task to supply such a definition to comprehension and this is due to the fact that " [I]n addition to linguistics, comprehension could be associated with psychology, psycholinguistics, sociology, culture among many other areas of knowledge" (Muhammed 2003:3) . Muhammad (ibid) also cites a quotation of Tyler (1978) in which the latter asserts that "comprehension is either a question of individual psychology, and therefore outside the realm of linguistic theory properties, or a question about the abstract properties of the mechanism which encodes and decodes messages". Thus, when people comprehend or try to comprehend, there is a process of encoding what is decoded in the message. In language comprehension, the listener uses the sounds which are uttered by the speaker to construct an interpretation of what he thinks the speaker intends to convey.

Comprehension is a process in which the message receiver depends on his prior knowledge concerning the subject matter being talked about. It is the ability to understand or the act of understanding. Clearly, people can understand literal meanings more easily than the non-literal, or the figurative, meanings. There are different theories which attempt to investigate the nature of comprehension although they "have been mainly directed towards the processing of direct, literal meaning" (Al-Bazi, op. cit. :53) . However, there are still some attempts at approaching how

non-literal, figurative, or metaphorical language is comprehended.

Moreover, the difficulty behind the study of comprehension lies in the fact that there are many factors that contribute to a clear and thorough definition to comprehension. The notion of comprehension is not limited to linguistics; there are other fields to which comprehension is related such as psychology, sociology and others.This is because the mechanism ofcomprehension requires that many factors – linguistic and non-linguistic- cooperate together.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1Introduction

It has been widely believed that metaphors are a major source of knowledge change as a great deal of research has examined how metaphor is recognized and comprehended. Most of such researches have been motivated by the findings of the Metaphor Theory advocated in Lakoff and Johnson (op. cit.) who deal with metaphor as a conceptual aspect. Accordingly , " people talk about things the way they conceive them , and this fashioned through and grounded in experience and culture" (Al-Thamery, 2009:3). Meanwhile , many linguists and scholars have focused on comprehending metaphor as a psycholinguistic aspect.

Comprehending metaphorical expressions depends on many aspects, the most important of which is the " degree of availability of the ground to the comprehender" (Al-Bazi, op. cit. :102). There are , of course , other aspects that affect the degree of comprehensibility of metaphor , some of which are linguistic and others are non-linguistic. This can also hold true in political discourse , where the use of metaphor is highly justified . In order to establish the degree of metaphor recognition and comprehension, it seems

necessary to take into consideration the linguistic as well as the non- linguistic background of the comprehender. For the current study , the testees have been selected from the teaching staff of Department of English and Department of translation , College of Arts , University of Basra , and Department of English , College of Education, University of Basra . This choice has been made because it has been hypothesized that metaphor comprehension is not an easy task and university instructors are the best to achieve such a task.

3.2 Objectives of the Test

The main aim of the test is to investigate university teaching-staff members' linguistic and cognitive ability to recognise and comprehend metaphor in media political texts. The study is based on what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refer to as ' Conceptual Metaphor ' .Meanwhile , the same test has been exposed to a well-educated native speaker of English from the Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge. This procedure can be made use of as the norm for comparing the native speaker's responses of those of the testees who are, in all cases , non-native speakers of English.

Though the issue of metaphor comprehension is a relative issue , still the English native speaker's responses can give a hint to whether some expressions are metaphorical or not.

The two objectives of the test ; recognition and comprehension , have been traced through the two tasks required from the testees ; underlining those expressions that they think metaphorical and providing appropriate interpretations for those expressions that they have already underlined. Yet, it has been noticed that some testees have underlined some expressions but they never provided interpretations for them. Testees' responses have been evaluated through the variable of the academic rank. Following this procedure, the test results showed to what

extent the academic rank of the informants plays a role in recognising and comprehending metaphor in political reports.

3.3 The Subjects

A total number of fifty university teaching-staff members is selected for the test. Twenty of them are from the Department of English, College of Education , University of Basra, and the others are from the Departments of English and Translation, College of Arts University of Basra. Some of the testees are Ph.D. holders and the others are M.A.

holders .Besides , some of the testees are professors and assistant professors, and others are lecturers, and assistant lecturers. Yet, the researcher has not received all the test sheets back , he has received only twenty of the papers. The most important aspect is that all of the testees are Iraqi , i.e., non-native speakers of English, and all of them are university teaching-staff members. The researcher has divided the 20 informants into four groups depending on their academic ranks. Therefore, informants 1-5 are professors; informants 6-10 are Assist. Professors; informants 11-15 are lecturers and informants 16-20 are Assist. lecturers.

3.4 Test Administration

The test was administrated in January 2010, at the Departments of English and Translation, College of Arts , University of Basra and Department of English, , College of Education , University of Basra. The testees were given the test sheets individually as it was difficult to group them together at one particular time. The time limit of the test was one hour and forty minutes (see section 3.6 below) . In order to get better results , the researcher informed the testees that their answers would be highly evaluated for the sake of an academic research. Also , the testees were asked to read the test items very carefully and then answer the two questions presented in the test sheet. Thus, they

were requested to do two tasks: underlining those expressions that they think metaphorical and , then , providing appropriate interpretations for these metaphorical expressions that they have underlined . These two requirements serve the two crucial aims of the whole study;recognition and comprehension . By underlining the metaphorical expressions , the researcher would know degree to which a testee has been able to recognise the a specific

metaphorical expression, though not necessarily been able to interpret it. Similarly, the second task the testees were requested to achieve can be used as a measurement for metaphor comprehension. Yet, the two tasks in combination can be made use of in measuring the whole level of metaphor comprehensibility in media political reports.

3.5 Test Validity

In order to evaluate the validity of the test , it has been exposed to a jury.[•] The jury has made certain modifications to the items given in the test as well as to the questions given to the testees. The jury consists of six teaching –staff members who have been selected from the three mentioned departments. In this respect , the researchers have made sure that the test items are valid and can test what they are supposed to do.

Moreover , the jury members were kindly asked to validate whether the language of the political texts used in the test was clear enough and whether the metaphorical expressions used were well-selected. Consequently , some texts have been revised . The researcher has taken the jury's comments into consideration, and so , the jury has determined the validity of the test.

3.6 Test Timing
The researcher has observed that the native speaker of English has taken one hour and ten minutes to recognise

and interpret metaphorical expressions in the test form. To decide the time limits of the test , a pilot test has been applied to six university teaching-staff members of different academic ranks.

It has been found out that the slowest responsehas been obtained throughone hour and forty minutes . Therefore, each testee was requested to finish the test within the same time limit.

3.7 Test Scoring

The test form consists of two requirements : the recognition test (RT), and the comprehension test (CT). In RT, the informants are required to underline those expressions or words which they would think metaphorical in the 23 items of the test. It is worth mentioning here that the researchers have selected 30 political reports at the beginning. After exposing these items to the jury, the jury members have reshaped the test and reduced the items to 23 items only. By comparing the informants' responses to those of the native speaker, each informant would get zero for the false response and one mark for the correct one. Then, the informants' total scores would be subjected to statistical procedures to show whether the differences in responses are significant or not.

The CT consists of 23 items. The researcher has adopted a six-grade scale to measure the performance of the informants in this test. A below average response has been given zero, an average response has been given one mark, an above average response has been given two marks , a good response has been given three marks, a very good response has been given four marks, whereas an excellent response has been given five marks. The responses have been compared to those of the native speaker to decide their positions in the scale.

3.8 Test Analysis

The test consists of 23 items which have been taken from three different sources. All of the items were taken from political reports published in different political occasions. Moreover, the items were of different length because the researchers aimed at investigating the degreeof comprehending both short and long texts. Some of the items have been selected because, according to the researcher's intuition, they contain clear-cut metaphorical expressions. It is hypothesized that most, if not all, of the testees will agree on the metaphoricity of such items. Yet, some items are still disputable and in judging whether or not they contain metaphoricity, the researcher will either make use of the English native speaker's responses to the same items or depend on the statistical results of the testees.

This section deals with the informants' responses to the test items as well as the scores given to each informant in both the RT and CT. The following table sums up the scores each informant has obtained.

3.9 Table # 1 Informants' Responses

Academic Rank's Scoring	Item No.	R. Score	C. Score
Prof. informant # 1$_{st}$ scoring	1 -23	20	83
Prof. informant # 2$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	19	77
Prof. informant # 3$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	20	89
Prof. informant # 4$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	19	83
Prof. informant # 5$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	22	87
Asst Prof. informant #6$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	21	79
Asst Prof. informant #7$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	19	68
Asst Prof. informant #8$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	19	73
Asst Prof. informant #9$_{'s}$ scoring	1 -23	17	64

Asst Prof. informant #10's scoring	1 -23	22	81
Lecturer informant #11's scoring	1 -23	18	61
Lecturer informant #12's scoring	1 -23	18	59
Lecturer informant #13's scoring	1 -23	15	49
Lecturer informant #14's scoring	1 -23	19	66
Lecturer informant #15's scoring	1 -23	16	54
Asst. Lecturer informant #16's scoring	1 -23	15	44
Asst. Lecturer informant #17's scoring	1 -23	15	52
Asst. Lecturer informant #18's scoring	1 -23	15	52
Asst. Lecturer informant #19's scoring	1 -23	14	37
Asst. Lecturer informant #20's scoring	1 -23	17	56

4. Results and Analyses of the Test

4.1 Display, Analyses, and Explanations of Results

In order to arrive at logical results, the researchers have depended on a statistical analysis in calculating the significant results of the test. This chapter is mainly concerned with showing the frequencies of each of the calculated values in the test results as well as some other statistical procedures which can help in explaining the main differences among the informants' responses, on the one hand, and the differences in recognising and comprehending the metaphorical expressions and/or words among the test items on the other hand. Moreover, the statistical procedures have been used in deciding which of the 23 test items is more difficult to be recognised and

comprehended. Thus, the statistical results make it clearer as to which informant has managed to grasp which metaphorical expressions.

4.2 Scoring Analysis••

In the CT, the results show that there are (110) responses which are recorded as below average (BA); the informants have been unable to comprehend the metaphorical expressions in these items, yet they might have managed to recognise some or all of those expressions in the test items. Therefore, the number of the BA responses is (23.91%) of the total number of responses.

The average responses (A) are those responses which are closer to the norm's responses than the BA responses. There are (11) average

responses in the test results which are (2.39%) of the total number of the responses in the whole test. Furthermore, the results show that (35) responses have been marked as Above-Average (AA) responses since they are closer to the norm than both the BA responses and the A responses. This number of responses is (7.60 %) of the total number of the test responses. Meanwhile, there are (84) responses which have been recorded as good (G) because they are, to some extent, closer to the norm's response than the three mentioned kinds of responses, i.e., the BA, A, and AA responses . This number of responses is (18.20%) of the total test responses.

Moreover, there are (118) Very Good (VG) responses which equal (25.65.%) of the total test responses. The VG responses are those responses which are very close to the norm's responses, but still they are not as accurate as the final type of responses which is the Excellent (E) responses. Meanwhile, the test results show that there are (102) responses which have been marked as E responses since they are approximately accurate. This number of

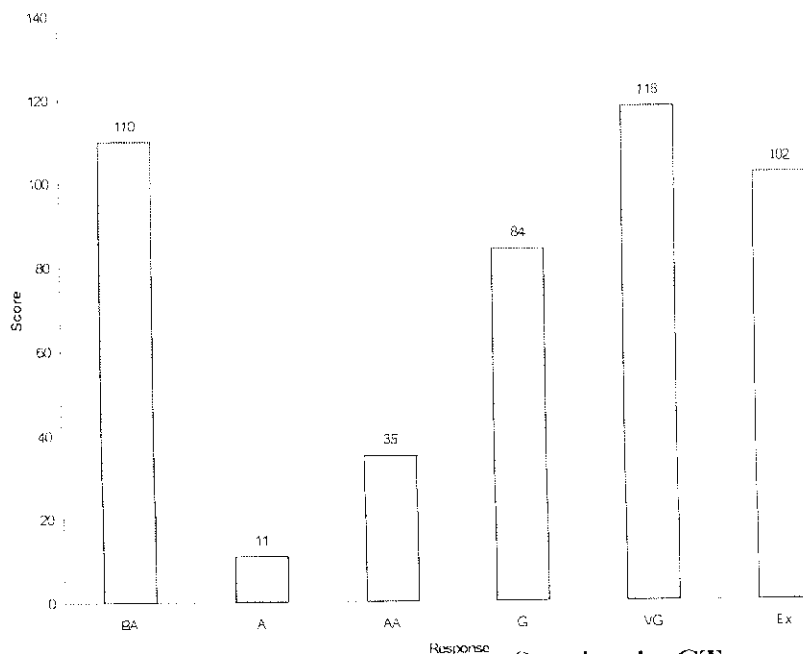responses is up to (22.17%) of the total number of responses in the test items.

Table # 2 below sums up the scoring results

Table # 2 Responses Scoring in CT

Response	CT Mark	CT Percentage
BA.	110	23.91
A.	11	2.39
AA.	35	7.60
G.	84	18.20
VG.	118	25.65
Ex.	102	22.17
Total	460	100

Figure # 1 Responses Scoring in CT

Figure # 1

As figure # 1 above shows, the lowest score which is (11) out of (460) has been recorded for the A responses while the highest score has been recorded for the VG responses which is (118).

4.3 Informants' Scoring

The results have shown that the informants' response in metaphor comprehension differs exclusively. The difference in metaphor comprehension is due to many factors among which is the comprehender's linguistic as well as non-linguistic background which can be traced through the informants' academic ranks. Figure # 3 and Figure # 4 below sum up the arithmetic mean of the four groups of informants in both RT and CT, respectively.
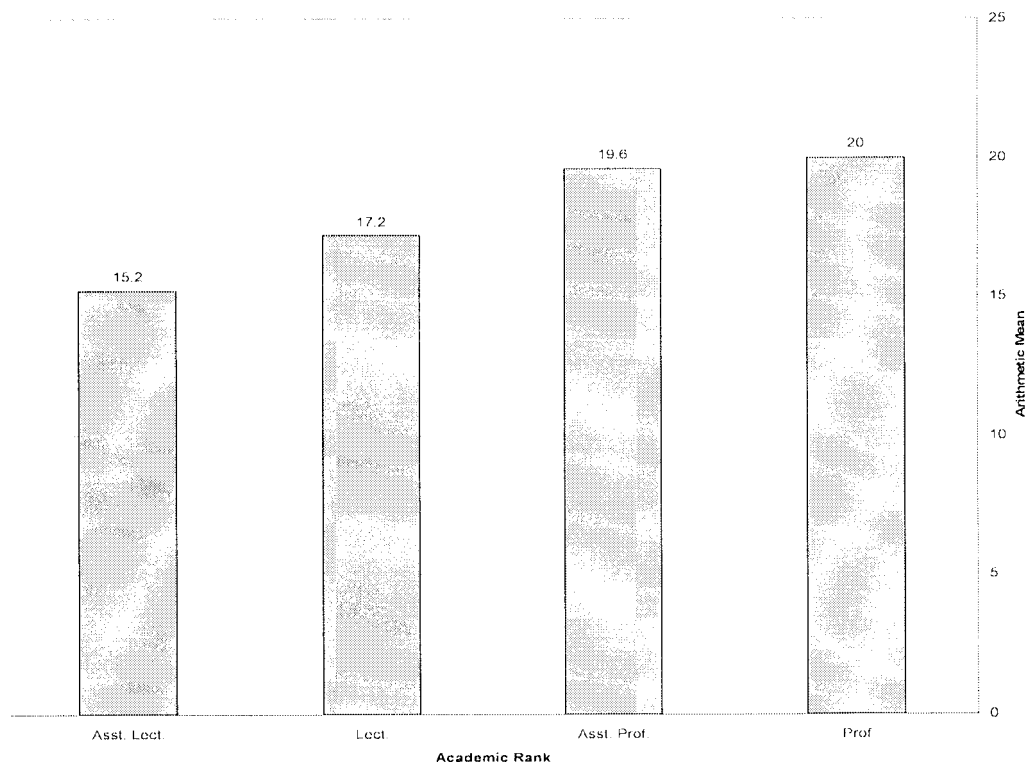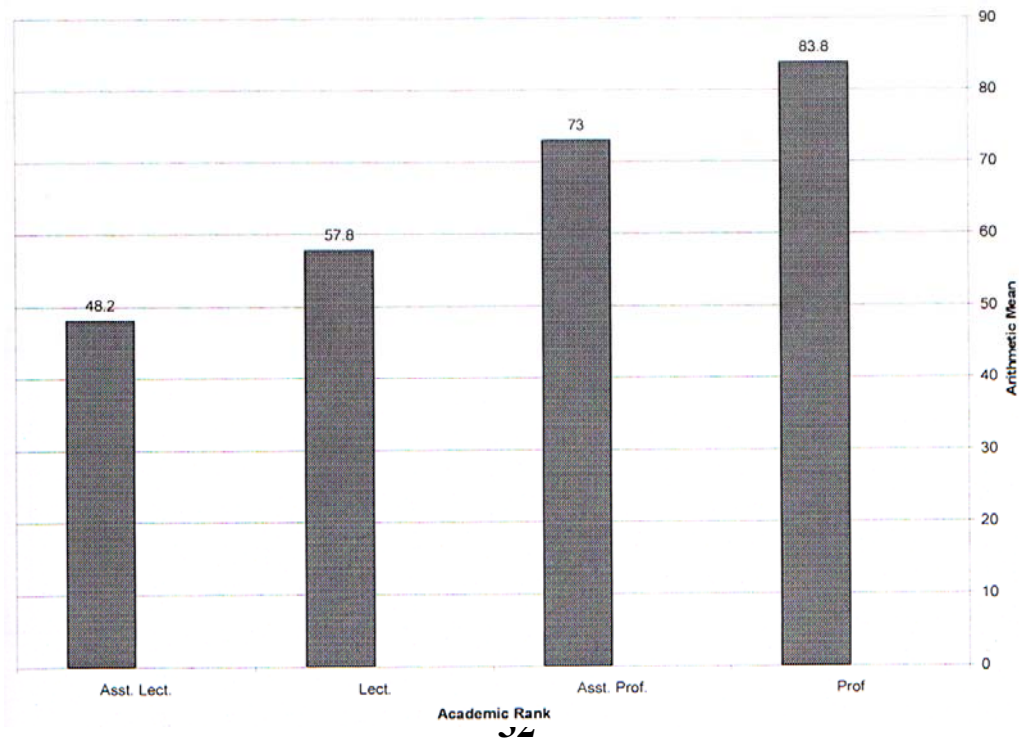
Figure #2 Arithmetic Mean for Informants' Responses in RT
Table #3 Arithmetic Mean For Informants' Responses in CT

Prof	Asst. Prof.	Lect.	Asst. Lect.
83.8	73	57.8	48.2

Figure #3 Arithmetic Mean for Informants' Responses in CT

Figure # 3 above shows clearly that informants with a Prof. academic rank have managed to identify and recognise the metaphorical expressions in the test items more than the other three groups. Similarly, the Assist. Prof. informants have obtained more scores than both Lecturers and Assist.

Lecturers. This implies that the academic rank plays a crucial role in metaphorical recognition, because more linguistic experience always accompany the high academic rank. Moreover, Figure # 3 above shows that the arithmetic mean of the Prof. rank informants is closer to that of the norm than the other groups of informants, and that the lowest value of arithmetic

mean has been obtained by Assist. Lecturers, and this is also due to the shorter linguistic experience of the latter in comparison with the other three groups.

In order to know the degree of significance of the academic rank variable on metaphor comprehension, the researcher has subjected the informants' responses to statistical procedures. Table # 4 below shows the statistical results of the four groups of the informants' responses.

Table # 4 Statistics of Informants' Responses

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1.00	5	20.0000	1.2247	.5477	18.4793	21.5207	19.00	22.00
2.00	5	19.6000	1.9494	.8718	17.1796	22.0204	17.00	22.00
3.00	5	17.2000	1.6432	.7348	15.1597	19.2403	15.00	19.00
4.00	5	15.2000	1.0954	.4899	13.8398	16.5602	14.00	17.00
Total	20	18.0000	2.4279	.5429	16.8637	19.1363	14.00	22.00

As it is clear from Table # 4, the standard deviation of each of the four groups indicates that the members of each group are homogeneous and therefore, their responses have been close to each other . The aspect of Std. Deviation in each group is necessary in measuring the degree of dispersion of its variance. As Table # 4 shows, the Std. Deviation of variable # 1, which stands for Prof. academic rank , is 1.224 which is less than the square root. As a result, group 1 has a low Std. Deviation, therefore the members of group 1 are homogeneous. The same could be said about the other 3 groups concerning their Std. Deviations.

Moreover, Table # 5 below shows that the calculated F value among the four groups of informants is 10.899 which is greater than the tabulated Fvalue which is 0.05, hence, the difference in responses among the four groups of testees is highly significant. Again, the difference in responses is due to the fact that the testees are of different academic ranks. Consequently, the order of arrangement of the informants' responses is ascending logically, i.e., Prof. informants have obtained more scores than all of the other groups and Assist. Prof. informants have obtained more scores than both Lecturers and Assist. Lecturers, whereas Lecturers have obtained higher scores than Assist.Lecturers.

Table # 5 ANOVA Test for Informants' Response

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	75.200	3	25.067	10.899	.H.Sig
Within Groups	36.800	16	2.300		
Total	112.000	19			

Table # 6 Multiple Comparisons

I) VAR00001	(J) VAR00002	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1.00	2.00	.4000	.9592	.682
	3.00	2.8000*	.9592	.010
	4.00	4.8000*	.9592	.000
2.00	1.00	-.4000	.9592	.682
	3.00	2.4000*	.9592	.024
		4.4000*	.9592	.000
3.00	1.00	-2.8000*	.9592	.010
	2.00	-2.4000*	.9592	.024
	4.00	2.0000	.9592	.053
4.00		-4.8000*	.9592	.000
	2.00	-4.4000*	.9592	.000
	3.00	-2.0000	.9592	.053

scoring as well as the significance of the differences in means of each group of informants. It is clear from Table # 6 that the difference in responses between Group #1 and Group #2 is insignificant because the significance value is 0.682 which is greater than the tabulated value which is (0.05). This indicates that both groups are close to each other in their cognitive knowledge since they have been able to grasp the metaphors in the test items. Also, the groups members' interpretations of the metaphors have been very close to those of the norm .

The significance value between group#1 and group # 3 is (0.01) and this indicates that the difference in performance between the two groups is highly significant since the significance value is less than the tabulated value which is (0.05). Moreover, the significance value between group #1 and group # 4 is (0.00) which also indicates that the differences are highly significant since it is less than the tabulated value which is (0.05).

Table # 6 also shows that the significance value between group # 2 and group # 3 is (0.024) and this value indicates that the differences between the two groups are significant . Meanwhile, the significance value between group # 2 and group #4 is (0.00) which is also significant. At last, Table # 6 shows that the significance value between group # 3 and group # 4 is (0.053) which is greater than the tabulated value which is (0.05). Therefore the difference is considered insignificant.

4.4 Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, the statistical procedures show that there are no significant differences between group # 1 and group # 2 which stand for Professors informants and Assist. Prof. informants respectively. Also, statistics shows

that the differences between Lect. informants and Assist. Lect. informants are insignificant. The significant differences are those differences between Prof. informants and Lect. informants on one hand, and between Prof. informants and Assist. Lect. informants on the other hand. Similarly, there are significant differences between Assist. Prof. informants and Lect. informants on the one hand, and between Assist. Prof. informants and Asst. Lecturer informants on the other hand.

In addition, out of the statistically significant differences that have been found among the test items, one might conclude that the ease or difficulty in metaphor recognition and comprehension depends on the complexity of the item which contains that particular metaphorical expression. Some metaphorical expressions have been recognised and comprehended easier than others which have been problematic for the informants when trying to find out the metaphorical expressions.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

Metaphor comprehension is not an easy task to achieve. Even native speakers, sometimes, are able to understand metaphors when used but cannot identify them when asked to do so. The present study has been based on the cognitive nature of metaphor, i.e., metaphor is related to cognition and it should be dealt with in this way. However, well-educated non-native speakers of English are supposed to be able to recognise and comprehend metaphorical expressions that carry certain characteristics. The results obtained by the researchers have led to certain points of conclusion which can be summed up as follows:

1- Simple sentences that have metaphorical expressions are easier to be comprehended than others which are longer and more complex.

2- Some of the non-native university informants are not competent enough in recognising metaphorical expressions; this is due to the fact that they have solely been taught metaphor as a separate subject.

3- The closer the metaphorical expression to the comprehender's culture, the easier it is recognised and comprehended by her/him.

4- The linguistic knowledge and the experience of the comprehender play a crucial role in helping the him/her to recognise and comprehend metaphorical expressions

5- Metaphor is not only a characteristic of poetic language, it is also, thoroughly used in language of politics as an important technique.

5.2 Suggestions

The researchers suggest the following, for future projects:

1- Culture plays a crucial role in metaphor understanding. Future studies could concentrate on the role culture plays in metaphor comprehension.

2- Since metaphor is prevailing in our daily life, and since it is an important aspect of language, the researchers suggest that metaphor should be taught in the early years of university courses whether separately or within other subjects.

3- Some metaphorical expressions are culture-based while others are universal. Therefore, teachers and university instructors are advised to teach the metaphors which are close to the learner's culture as well as those which are of the foreign cultures concerned. This will be useful in making the foreign learners acquainted with the foreign culture, and their metaphors.

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