"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

A SEMANTIC CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF FOLKLORE IN EDGAR'S "THE RAVEN"

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD University of Babylon –College of Education for Human Sciences <u>Qasimabbas@uobabylon.edu.iq</u> Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah University of Babylon –College of Education for Human Sciences <u>hudhudqhtan@gmail.com</u>

Abstract

This study examines the various folkloric elements used in Edgar's " The Raven ". Establishing a contrastive semantic way of analysis using the conceptual metaphor images to enhance how the lexical meaning is reflected. The current study aims to finds out the potential difference and similarities that results when translating a certain text . As a result , the study ends with a conclusion that both of the folkloric elements and conceptual metaphor work together making the reader's mind conceptualize the literary images differently ; depending not only on the cognitive conceptualization but also on the different social and cultural experiences and backgrounds of an individual. Consequently, leading to divergent interpretations for any literary text .

Key words : Folklore . The raven . Semantic contrastive . conceptual metaphor

1. Introduction

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett as cited in (Kondi, April, 2019) states that folklore can be defined as a specific way for cultural outputting; it overemphasizes the oral tradition more than the aural reception. The effect of oral performance is based on two reasons; the power of poetics language and second is the charm of spoken language as it forwarded from mouth to ear in conventional communities. Meanings in some of the folkloric genres are classified in terms of the linguistic construct which is transmitted throughout anecdotal format and performative pattern throng. In its purest or idealized form, oral culture is imagined and defined against literacy and writing, recording and broadcasting technologies, though this web of connections seems to enhance rather destroy folk practice. The penned and unwritten forms are mixed in the imitative poetry and music-making of miscellaneous cultures in the world.

This research investigates translation of folklore from an English poem into its Arabic version, employing Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory to examine the influence of folklore on cross-cultural comprehension. The study reveals divergences in the conceptual structuring of abstract notions between English and Arabic, underscoring the impact of cultural context on metaphor translation. By elucidating these cultural dissimilarities, the analysis demonstrates the role of folklore in shaping the translation process and influencing the reader's experience across linguistic backgrounds. This investigation provides new insights into the challenges of translating metaphorical language while maintaining its inherent cultural significance.

The study seeks to answer the following questions : 1) How does the use of metaphor in Arabic and English influence thought processes? 2) what role does folklore play in understanding these metaphors? 3)How does the structuring of abstract concepts vary across cultures and language (the Arabic and the English)?

The study aims at : 1)Identifying the way in which metaphors are presented in the two texts (the Arabic and The English) . 2)Focusing on the impact of folklore on how readers understand and interpret metaphorical language , 3) Pinning out the difference of structuring abstract concepts due to the cultural differences among languages .

It is hypothesizes that :1 there is a quite different embodiment of folklore that results from the use of metaphors .2 Folklore effects the way in which readers of both first and second language interpret metaphorical language .3 Cultural differences and the use of metaphor lead to uneven cognitive conceptualization in the mind of readers of both English and Arabic languages.

"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

The study is limited to explore and explicate the use of metaphors in Edgar's " The Raven " . in addition to presenting folklore with its influence in evoking readers to conceptualize and interpret metaphors in both The English and the Arabic translated version by شهراني in the mentioned poem. Adopting The Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson as a modal to achieve the desired aim.

The study draw a portrait of presenting folklore and metaphors to shape conceptual metaphorical meaning between different languages ; this can be achieved Throughout making a contrastive semantic study.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Semantic contractive analysis : Contrastive linguists deals with the concentration upon contrasting two or more languages for the aim of pointing out likenesses and dissimilarities that hold between the languages being compared as well as potential areas of learning problems. Thus, it would be very helpful to identify any translation problems that arise from the differences found in both languages (Khalil, 1999).

Contrastive analysis is a part of contrastive linguistics to study a pair of languages in an attempt to identifying their structural differences and similarities. Such a method of analysis was very distinguished in the domain of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) during the 1960s and early 1970s. Moreover, It was considered as a way of explicating the reason behind having a particular features of a target language as were comparatively more inapproachable to acquire than others (Mercy, 2015).

For suggesting a systematic set of technical procedures for the contrastive study of language. According to Lado (1957), CA goes through four stages : selection, description, contrast and prediction.

2.2 Semantics : understanding the nature of language requires an endeavor to describe and explain the meaning of the linguistic expressions since meaning is of

a massive importance ; it can be considered as the core center of language .In other words , let's say that meaning is ; what is specify the purpose of using language ; having a language without meaning , would be just like having a body without soul (Riemer, 2010). Language loses one of its requisite traits when meaning is being excluded . We practically always speak or write in order to express a meaning of one kind or another (Riemer, 2010).

2.3 Folklore

Folklore : Folklore is a genuine representation for folk culture, as it considered the national sources of life for the coming generations . folklore is a symbolizing of culture because it can be considered as a wall to wall part of the life of the world . It is a configuration for the experience of main representations that grow directly from the biologic , preverbal, sensual and simultaneously symbolic space of speech; such an unconscious structured speech. Folklore deals with the emphasis of cultural archetypes (Sadovenko , 2019).

Mouton (August 31, 2020) states that Folklore can be defined as the passing of accumulated information we got as a part of the history of our own people; this kind of information has passed on from generation to generation for hundreds, or even thousands of years.

Folklore originally folklore is called "authentic" from the Greek "authenticus" which means true, reliable. It is an authentic since it has a great role for preservation of the rituals and ordinances which in turns is considered a coexistence of the society. At the same time, it has maintained the mythological world's view with its characteristic emotional associativity. Having a particular historical tint and a particular historical content: sacred, ritual, aesthetic, pragmatic, folklore in general and especially traditional folklore is a structural and meaningful item of folk art culture . (Mouton, August 31, 2020).

2.4 Characteristics of folk literature : Web 1

- There are covariances in the process of folklore telling due to their passing down orally through generations .
- Folklore reflects much of a community significant events that influenced the people of that community. As a result it shared most of their integral part of life. Moreover, it work as a mirror reflecting the values and morals of a community. It sometimes convey a moral lesson representing a teaching issue that the community believe in
- From another angle, folklore involving heroic tales often with a combination of singing with musical instruments ; consequently fashioning

"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

of poetic shapes with meters that progressed and passed on over time. An instance of this is the Greek epics.

• Tales in folklore usually involves tales which contains animals or characters or a mixing of both and search how they carry on everyday life happenings and conjunctures. Those characters are either have a role solving a problem or proving a specific moral premium. That's to say, characters act as an embodiment for good and evil. in this respect the notion of punishment and reward is also manifested.

There are four kinds of folkloric literature elements : these are the most common folklore genres : fairy tales, fables, myths and legends . In this poem Edgar almost uses some of them .

From the above mentioned piece of information, the study is devoted to present a semantic contrastive study to deal with folklore; in other words, making a contrastive study to highlight any semantic similarities and differences that could emerge when contrasting the two versions of Edgar's "The Raven ". The current study uses conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson 1980 as a model for analysis.

2.5 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The release of Lakoff and Johnson's "*Metaphors We Live By* " in 1980, it was the production for Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). it has been broadly acknowledged that metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also an intrinsic implement throughout it, understanding the world turns to be easier. The emphasis upon metaphor study has been relocated to the cognitive aspects of metaphor such as its nature, comprehension, working mechanism, etc.; this is because of our ordinary conceptual system concerning the way we think and do actions is inherently metaphorical in nature . Yet, metaphor is still a social and functional phenomenon . Consequently a metaphor furnishes a certain view for grasping and explicating the world (Guo, March, 2013).

According to CMT, metaphor is not a matter of language but of thought. The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Functioning as a cognitive mechanism, metaphor is a mapping between two domains . It alters comprehension from a more concrete and tangible source to a more abstract intangible one. For example, the metaphor "TIME IS MONEY ", we have the concept of time as the target domain ; this abstract concept could be explicated using the more concrete and very common concept of money. Such a cognitive process helps us to grasp different abstract items in more relatable terms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Kövecses (2010), explains that our everyday experiences within the physical world supply a basic framework which enhances and shapes our comprehension of more abstract ideas.

One of the crucial characteristics of metaphor is the systematic nature of cross- domain mapping . there is a type of ontological correspondence which means that entities in the target domain correspond systematically to those in the source domain. For instance "LIFE IS A JOURNEY, here " the person" is envisioned as corresponds to "traveler", "life state" to "location", whereas " life goal " which aligns with a " destination " and difficulties are explicated as constraints along the way of life " . Activating such correspondences helps mapping our knowledge about entities in the source domain onto those in the target domain, leading to occasional correspondences.

The above mentioned correspondences assist us reasoning about the events of life ; like having a traveller who may come a cross and to obstacles on the road. The reaction could be individuals in life may either confront their challenges and move on or disheartened and give up . Yet , it is consequential mentioning that metaphorical mapping is selective and partial . This means that , not every item of the source domain is altered to the target domain ; only specific aspects of the target are marked by the metaphor . An example for this is in " LIFE IS A JOURNEY " , we can see that specific matters for a journey such as "travel agency", "luggage " are typically left out (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

CMT opposes the comparison theory which argues that the basis of metaphor is pre-existing similarities between the source domain and target domain. Instead, CMT claims that people's experience forms the basis of metaphor Two irrelevant domains are correlated in the experience so that people use the experience of one domain to talk about the other, supplying a novel point of view for

"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

comprehending . In "TIME IS MONEY ", despite of the fact that there are no objective likenesses between time and money, both are highly correlative in daily life. Wages, communication fees, bank interests are paid against time. The outcome of metaphor is then that we can conceptualize and imagine the likenesses between them: both could be spent, saved, wasted, etc. Hence Lakoff and Johnson (1980) confirm that metaphor edifies likenesses rather than reverse

Moreover, metaphorical patterns extend beyond language. The "thumbs up" gesture, for example, is motivated by the GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN metaphor, aligning upward movement with positive affect. Non-linguistic metaphors have been identified across various domains, including advertising (Ungerer 2000), and mathematics (Lakoff and Núñez 2000).

CMT distinguishes between simple and complex metaphors.. Lakoff and Johnson further classify metaphors as structural, ontological, and orientational. Structural metaphors, like LOVE IS A JOURNEY, establish a rich network of correspondences between domains. Ontological metaphors, such as personifications (e.g., "Inflation is eating up our profits"), assign broad categories to non-human entities. Orientational metaphors, like MORE IS UP, apply spatial or sensorimotor image schemas to abstract domains (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

3.Methodology

3.1 Data Description

The chosen data for the current study is a poem by Edgar Allen Poe " The Raven " with its translated version by متريف بقنه الشهراني . This poem is a narrative poem type ,first published in January 1845. The poem expresses different themes such as death , loss , madness and other psychological distress. The use of symbols like " Pallas " , " Athena " and " the night Plutonian shore " as well as the use of metaphors . These elements are extensively used in this poem as a result

this characteristic makes the poem convenient to the analysis of folklore element with a conceptual metaphorical realization flavor .

3.2 Data Collection

The data has been chosen intentionally since it fulfills the following criteria : it contains a good amount of folklore elements as well as an efficient number of metaphors. Also, a reliable translation in the Arabic language serves the contrastive linguistics study.

3.3 The Model

The current study adopts a qualitative model of analysis using the conceptual metaphor theory CMT by Lakoff and Johnson 1980 .concentrating on the mapping between the source (concrete or familiar)domain and the target domain (abstract or unfamiliar).Lakoff and Johnson distinguish between simple and complex metaphor and they present three types of conceptual metaphors such as structural , ontological and orientational metaphors ; for instance' love is a journey'. In Edgar's poem the Metaphor ' death is a departure ' has been reflected in the poem as a whole .

Additionally , Lakoff and Núñez 2000) states that metaphorical patterns extend beyond language ,for example, is motivated by the GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN metaphor, aligning upward movement with positive affect.. CMT claims that people's experience forms the basis of metaphor Two irrelevant domains are correlated in the experience so that people use the experience of one domain to talk about the other, providing a new perspective for understanding. Moreover, metaphor is also considered as a social and functional element which is used to provide a certain perspective for perceiving and interpreting the world . Last but not least , The Conceptual Metahpor Theory (CMT) has an essential principle stating that metaphor is basically a cognitive phenomenon rather than a linguistic one . That's to say the core of this theory lies in the way we comprehend and experience one conceptual domain from the angles of another .

Extract 1.Starting with **the title of the poem " The Raven "** ألغراب " is one of the folkloric elements that is used highlights and mould the whole meaning of the poem . As a source domain it represents a familiar concrete bird that is associated with abstract meaning such as bad omen , loss , evil , etc. This folklore element is found in both Arabic and English cultures . Making a comparison between the English " Raven " and its equivalent translation in the Arabic language " الغراب " . It is very clear that both Arabic and English cultural associate bad omen , loss , evil , evil with the raven . Here Edgar make use of conceptual metaphors as he

"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

conceptualizes death as departure ; mapping between two domains , a source domain which is (death) and a target domain (departure)As the poet develop and tangled his ideas in the poem , he goes beyond to highlight and emphasize the central theme of his poem (loss , distress , fear , evil and death).

Extract 2. English original :

" Ah , distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December , And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor". Arabic translation :

" آه, بوضوح تذكرت, انه كان في ديسمبر القابض, وأن كل جذوة مفصولة ميتة شكلت شبحا لها على الارض.

In this lines the poet uses the ontological type of conceptual metaphor as he gives personification describing " ember as " dying " . A structural conceptual metaphor mapping between the source domain (December) and the target domain (the bleak) . According to the original lines in the poem and their translated equivalents , The researcher sees that the Arabic reader would not conceptualize and have the same effect as when it happens with the English reader reading the text in the original language , that is because of the different cultural and social backgrounds .

Extract 3.English original :

From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore –
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore –
Nameless here for evermore . "

Arabic translation :

" من كتبي ينتهي الأسى , أسى لينور التائه , للبتول المتألقة النادرة التي يسمونها الملائكة لينور , "بلا اسم هنا ويدور . "

The poet here uses the ontological metaphors as he compare his lost beloved to a " rare and radiant " . moreover, he says " maiden " to add more dignity and divinity to his beloved . Metaphorically speaking , light and radiance refer to purity , holiness and moral value . In both cultures , (Arabic and English) the

same idea exists , for instance in the Arabic religious culture light is associated with good , pure and divine people . In the folkloric symbolism , The word " maiden " in the poem , according to Western folklore culture , the maiden archetype is tied to virginity , innocence and sacrifice . Here " Lenore " is idealized as pure and almost saint –like . To reinforce this , the poet uses a folkloric reference " the angels " , those angels name the poet's beloved as Lenore . From a folkloric perspective , the poet uses a common folklore that is found in almost every culture (the angels)in order to prove his idea about Lenore. This is one of the function of using folkloric elements that they function like a support for an idea . Furthermore , it reflects what Kövecses (2010), says that " our experiences with the physical world serve as a natural and logical foundation for the comprehension of more abstract domains ".

According to the conceptual metaphor , the above image is considered as an orientational type of conceptual metaphor Up is good , as the poet associates Lenore with angels .

From a semantic contrastive linguistic perspective , we have the idea of similarity . The readers of both cultures approximately have conceptualize the same picture in their mind as they read the words " the angels " . since in both culture angels are found to serve as a meditation between heaven and hearth , however, they cannot be seen unless someone is in the state of dreaming .

Extract 4. English original :

"And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain Thrilled mefilled me with fantastic terrors never felt before; " Arabic translation :

> "و الحزن الحريري بحفيف غير محدد لكل ستار ارجواني روعني ملأني بمخاوف رائعة لم أحسها من قبل"

Edgar here presents a structural conceptual metaphor as he describes the rustling as being sad and silken ; at the same time we have ontological conceptual metaphor when describing the rustling as sad while this feature (being sad) is related to animate beings. In other words, Edgars intensifies his sadness, fear and lost making the surrounding environment reflecting his state to the extent that even the curtain produces a special sound that is sad, uncertain and silken. The researcher thinks that the Arabic translation is incorrect concerning :

" الحزن الحريري بحفيف غير محدد "

ابحفيف حريري حزين غير محدد لكل ستار ارجواني : It would be better to be translated into

"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

Concerning the folkloric reference of purple colour ; it is a type of common folklore experience that is existed in almost all cultures . In Western culture purple colour is associated with mystery , imagination , spirituality , majesty, twilight , royalty , nobility , luxury , wisdom and nobility .Moreover, there are religious points of view which say that purple colour is linked to Virgin Mary and her son Jesus , thus the poet mentions this colour to enhance dignity , spirituality , and mystery ; all these work to determine the atmosphere of the poem .

Extract 5. English original :

" Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling, By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore. "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore-Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!" Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore." "

Here Edgar presents the folkloric references as in "**Night's Plutonian Shore** " Pluto is the Roman god of the underworld ; it represents a mythological underworld or afterlife. The Arabic reader as he reads the text of this poem, he would not conceptualize the same image that is found in the poet's mind or in the English reader's mind because of the different cultural and religious backgrounds, though Arabic Islamic culture has the idea of the world after life and eschatology " عالم البرزخ ".The translation preserves folklore references and general metaphorical mappings, but slightly lose cultural meanings about mythology.

Extract 6. English original :

"And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door ; And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming, And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor Shall be lifted-nevermore! "

Arabic translation :

والغراب فلاينتقل بيبقي يستقر بيبقي يستقر على تمثال بالاس الشاحب تماما فوق باب حجرتي وعيَّناه تتهيأ كشيِّطان يتطير و ضوء المصباح فيه يتدفق ليلقى بظل له على الأرضية وروحي من خارج ذاك الظل الذي يمتد مرفرفا على الأرضية فلا بيقي إلا إ أبدا , ليس بعد ذلك .

To the end of the poem, Edgar keeps on mapping between the raven and death; the raven's presence in the poet's chamber represents death's omnipresence. Also, poet's soul is captivated by the raven 's shadow; this has a symbolic meaning that the poet's soul is captivated by death. Enhancing the evil and fear in this poem, the poet produce another kind of metaphor as he describe the raven as " his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming ". This metaphorical expression maps the concept of a demon's eyes onto the raven's eyes , to create a rich and complex meaning . The source domain : demons that are often associated with evil entities, supernatural powers, fear, dread or terror, chaos, darkness or the unknown. The target domain : the previous features of demon are to be liked with the raven's eyes. As a result, the raven's eyes seem to possess supernatural power as they can see into the narrator's soul (the poet). At the same time they evoke fear, terror and mystery last but not least, in both Arabic and Western culture the notion of demon exists nearly in the same way, thus when translating there would be no loss or shift in the conceptual meaning.

3.4 Discussion

The present study examines how Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* employs folkloric elements and conceptual metaphors from a contrastive linguistic perspective, exploring how these devices are interpreted and translated between English and Arabic.

The results showed that by employing conceptual metaphors and folklore, the poem achieves deep symbolic meaning connected to death, fear, mystery, and psychological distress. These elements are not only literary but also cultural, and their understanding depends heavily on the reader's cultural background. As a

"The Raven "

Prof. Dr. Qasim Abbas Dhayef PHD Hadeel Qahtaan Abdullah

result, translation plays a crucial role in preserving or shifting these meanings across languages.

When presented with metaphorical images such as "The Raven," "Plutonian Shore," and "Lenore," the study reveals that cultural associations are activated differently in English and Arabic. The metaphor DEATH IS DEPARTURE and the symbolic role of the raven as a harbinger of loss exist in both languages. However, metaphors involving colour, sound, and spiritual figures like angels or demons are sometimes interpreted differently due to distinct religious and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, analysing metaphors and folklore within a literary and semantic context has a distinctive role, particularly from a contrastive standpoint, as it helps identify shared and divergent conceptual structures. At the linguistic level, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how metaphors, supported by folklore, shape reader interpretation. By scrutinising both the English original and the Arabic translation, the study highlights that while the core metaphors are often preserved, some cultural connotations are inevitably altered or lost in translation.

4. Conclusion

After this contrastive linguistic study, different conclusions have been drawn out . By examining the metaphorical nature of conceptual metaphors as well as the various types of folkloric elements, this study reveals complex and multifaceted nature of conceptual metaphors in literary texts; how can conceptual metaphors be conceptualized differently because of the effect of using folkloric elements, different social background knowledge of English and Arabic readers. This result answers the questions that are raised at the beginning in this research.

The current study highlights the importance of considering cultural context in the interpretation of literary metaphors . By recognizing the cultural specificity of conceptual metaphors , readers and scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the complex meanings and associations that underline literary texts .

References

Guo,S., (March, 2013). Metaphor Studies from the Perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis: A Case Study of Business Acquisition. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 475-481. doi 10.4304/tpls.3,3.

James, C. (1980). Contrastive analysis. London and New York.

Khalil , A. , (1999) . A contrastive grammar of English and Arabic . Jordon Book Centre .

Kondi, B., (April, 2019). Folklore. Researcher Gate.

Kövecses, Z. (2010). Metaphor: A practical introduction (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980). Metaphors We Live by. University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, George and Rafael E. Núñez (2000). Where Mathematics Comes from. How the Embodied Mind Brings Mathematics into Being. New York:

Mercy, A. (2015). Contrastive analysis. Chula.

Mouton , G., (August 31, 2020). Folklore as an evidential category. *Folia Linguistica*. <u>https://doi.org/10.1515/flin-2020-2051</u>

Riemer, N., (2010). Introducing semantics .Cambridge University Press.

Sadovenko, S. (2019). Folklore as a semantic core of Ukrainian folk art culture. European Humanties Studies 1(11), http://dio.org/10.38014/ehs-ss.2019.1-11.14 Ungerer, Friedrich and Hans-Jörg Schmid (2006). An Introduction to Cognitive 286/317 Linguistics. 3rd ed. London: Pearson Longman.

Web Source 1 : <u>https://www.studysmarter.co.ku</u>

Web Source 2 : http: <u>www.jehat.com/ar /</u> Kheyanat Thahabeya/interpreters /Pages/shareef.html