Conceptual Metaphors of Plants in Iraqi Arabic Proverbs

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دراسة مفهومية مجازية للنباتات في الأمثال العربية العراقية

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Abstract

Metaphor is one of the most well-known ideas that deals with figurative and nonliteral language. Unlike the cognitive and conceptual metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), which defines metaphor as comprehending abstract notions (target domain) in terms of more concrete concepts (source domain), other theories view metaphor as a linguistic instrument. The primary component of our conceptual system, conceptual metaphor, is the cognitive phenomena that is the subject of this study. Complex and abstract ideas are realized and expressed in terms of concrete ones through the use of metaphor. The methodical mappings between the two domains are necessary for conceptual metaphor. The metaphors of plants in Iraqi proverbs are examined in this study. It seeks to identify the foundations and purposes of these metaphors as well as abstract ideas that are conceptualized or comprehended by concrete ideas of plant-related phrases in Iraqi proverbs. The study makes the assumption that a wide range of abstract ideas are conceptualized and comprehended in terms of terms connected to plants. In addition, experience and culture are used as the foundation for metaphors. Data for the study comes from native speakers of Iraqi. Both literal and non-literal translations are used for the data. The study adopts Lakoff and Johnson"s Metaphors We Live by (1980) strategies The study concludes that the ability of conceptual metaphor theory (henceforth: CMT) contributes to reveal various abstract concepts which are understood in terms of more concrete concepts. In addition, experience and cultural values play a role in motivating the metaphorical conceptualization. **Key words : Plants metaphor, Source domain, Target domain, Conceptual Metaphor(CM), Conceptual Metaphor Theory(CMT).**

الملخص

تعتبر الاستعارة من أكثر الأفكار شهرة والتي تتعامل مع اللغة المجازية وغير الحرفية. وعلى عكس نظرية الاستعارة المعرفية والمفاهيمية التي وضعها لاكوف وجونسون (١٩٨٠)، والتي تعرف الاستعارة بأنها استيعاب المفاهيم المجردة (الهدف) من حيث المفاهيم الأكثر واقعية (المصدر)، فإن نظريات أخرى تنظر إلى الاستعارة باعتبارها أداة لغوية. إن المكون الأساسي لنظامنا المفاهيمي، الاستعارة المفاهيمية، هو الظواهر المعرفية التي تشكل موضوع هذه الدراسة. يتم تحقيق الأفكار المعقدة والمجردة والتعبير عنها من حيث الأفكار الملموسة من خلال استخدام الاستعارة. إن التعيينات المنهجية بين المجالين ضرورية للاستعارة المفاهيمية. يتم فحص استعارات النباتات في الأمثال العراقية في هذه الدراسة. وهي تسعى إلى تحديد أسس وأغراض هذه الاستعارات وكذلك الأفكار المجردة التي يتم تصورها أو فهمها من خلال الأفكار الملموسة للعبارات المتعلقة بالنباتات في الأمثال العراقية. تفترض الدراسة أن مجموعة واسعة من الأفكار المجردة يتم تصورها وفهمها من حيث المصطلحات المرتبطة بالنباتات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم استخدام الخبرة والثقافة كأساس للاستعارات. تأتي بيانات الدراسة من المتحدثين الأصليين للغة العراقية. يتم استخدام الترجمات الحرفية وغير الحرفية للبيانات. تتبنى الدراسة استراتيجيات لاكوف وجونسون "الاستعارات التي نعيش بها" (١٩٨٠). تستنتج الدراسة

إلى أن قدرة نظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية تساهم في الكشف عن المفاهيم المجردة المختلفة التي يتم فهمها من حيث المفاهيم الأكثر واقعية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تلعب الخبرة والقيم الثقافية دورًا في تحفيز التصور المجازي.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, scholars have interested in metaphor. Regarding the topic of metaphor and reviewing the traditional theories of language, Aristotle is recognised as the first to believed that metaphor was a language issue rather than a mental one. In some ways, metaphor is similar to simile. For instance, "Reading that essay was like wading through mud" employs metaphor to highlight similarities. On the other hand, Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) introduced their theory of metaphor, taking a different approach by connecting metaphor to cognitive linguistics. . On the other hand, Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) introduced their theory of metaphor, taking a different approach by connecting metaphor to cognitive linguistics. (Saeed, 2016, p.370). Metaphor is defined as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" in the field of cognitive linguistics. As a result, a mapping exists between two domains: the target domain (abstract domain) and the source domain (concrete domain). The cognitive theory of metaphor demonstrates how speakers might comprehend abstract and difficult ideas like "time, importance, love, argument" by connecting them to more tangible ideas. (Lakoff, 1993, p. 206). This study aims to employ CMT as a tool to examine the conceptual metaphor (CM) of plants in Iraqi proverbs, with a particular focus on exposing the metaphors' foundations. The main hypotheses of the study are: 1- The study assumes that different abstract concepts are understood in terms of plant related terms in Iraqi proverbs. 2- the mental metaphor of the plant is motivated in part by cultural values and the physical reality. Proverbs have always been true and will continue to be so. This essay examines proverbs as a notion, a social communication tool, and a theoretical communication category. Like metaphors, proverbs are sayings or stories that are meant to support formal education as well as informal, family- or folk-based learning. This describes proverbs as a legitimate way to communicate both inside and outside of cultural contexts. According to the aforementioned, proverbs serve as a medium of communication, are frequently employed in context all over the world, offer a methodical perspective on life's phenomena, forecast the causes and effects of phenomena, and occasionally forecast the future depending on contextual factors. As a result, proverbs might be considered a theoretical category within the field of communication. The literature review and accompanying visuals will go into further detail on this. Like many other cultures, Iraqi culture conveys wisdom and life lessons through proverbs relating to plants. The proverb "They planted, and we ate, and we will plant, so they will eat" illustrates one recurring theme: the significance of planting and nurturing for future benefits. Another saying highlights that planting, caring for, and creating an appropriate habitat are the keys to a tree's potential. Additionally, songs and proverbs mention the date palm, a prominent tree in Iraq, emphasizing its significance and ongoing existence in the local way of life. (Ehondor, 2017: 3)

2. Literature Review

2.1 What is metaphor

Löbner (2002: 50) claims that metaphor is: "concepts, notions, models, pictures from one domain, the source domain, are borrowed for the description of things in another domain, the target domain". In general, a metaphor produces a new concept in the target domain, which is similar to the original concept of the source domain which contains some features of the source concept, but not all of them. (Ibid). According to Searle (1979: 90) "the metaphorical statement and the corresponding similarity statement cannot be equivalent in meaning because they have different truth conditions".

2.2 Cognitive Linguistics

All facets of conscious and unconscious mental function are related to cognition. The mental events (mechanisms and processes) and information involved in a wide variety of tasks are specifically comprised by cognition. (Evans, 2007:17). Cognitive linguistics is the method used to study natural language. It is invented in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the work of George Lakoff, Ron Langacker, and Len Talmy. In line with this strategy, language is a tool for digesting, organising, and communicating information. As a result, cognitive linguistics places a high value on the conceptual and experiential analysis of language categories. As a result, the relationships between language's formal structures are investigated. These patterns are thought to reflect general conceptual organisation, categorization rules, processing mechanisms, as well as effects from the environment and personal experience. (Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2010: 1).

2.3 Conceptual Metaphor

According to the cognitive linguistic theory, a metaphor is when two conceptual domains are understood in relation to one another. As an illustration, consider how we discuss and think about life in terms of travels, debates in terms of conflict, love in terms of journeys, theories in terms of structures, concepts in terms of food, social organisations in terms of plants, and many more. The following is a useful shorthand for expressing this perspective on metaphor: A conceptual metaphor is what is meant by conceptual domain (a) being conceptual domain (b). Two conceptual domains make up a conceptual metaphor, where one domain is understood in the context of the other. The two domains involved in conceptual metaphor each have unique names. The conceptual domain that is understood in this way is known as the target domain, and the conceptual domain from which we derive metaphorical expressions to comprehend another conceptual domain is known as the source domain. As a result, source domains include travel, war, buildings, food, and plants, whereas target domains include life, arguments, love, theories, ideas, social organisations, and others. The domain we attempt to comprehend by using the source domain is known as the target domain. (KÖVECSES, 2010: 4)

2.4 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

According to the model of this study, metaphor is defined as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another".

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduce three kinds of metaphor structural, orientational and ontological. They explain the idea of the structural metaphor as the way that one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. Generally speaking, source domains give the target domains frameworks that define how we think and speak about the things and activities that the target domains refer to, as well as how we act or carry out tasks like argumentation. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 4-6).

ARGUMENT IS WAR

Your claims are indefensible.
He attacked every weak point in my argument.
His criticisms were right on target.
I demolished his argument.
I've never won an argument with him.
You disagree? Okay, shoot!
If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.
He shot down all of my arguments.

In this example, the language which chosen to express certain aspects of an argument (win or lose) an argument, (attack) an opposing argument, reflects the metaphorical framework of the underlying idea. This example explain what we do and how we understand what we are doing when we are argue. The benefit of metaphor is to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another. **Arguments** and **wars** are different kinds of things **verbal discourse** and **armed conflict** and the **actions performed** are different types of actions. We can say that metaphor is not just a matter of language or mere words. We shall argue that on the contrary human thought processes are largely metaphorical. This is what we mean when we say 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. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 4-6).

Another example **TIME IS MONEY**

You are wasting my time.This gadget will save you hours.I do not have the time to give you.

We know that *time* is a valuable commodity, it is a limited resource that we use to accomplish our goals. **TIME IS MONEY** in many ways: telephone message units, hourly wages, hotel room rates and interest on loans. We understand and experience time as the kind of thing that can be spent, wasted, budgeted, invested wisely or poorly, saved, or squandered. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 7-8).Apart from the structural metaphor, an additional type of conceptual metaphor exists, which is the orientational metaphor. This kind of metaphor arranges an entire system of concepts in relation to one another rather than structuring one concept in terms of another. It represents the different spatial conceptions, such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral, based on the orientation of space as experienced physically by humans. We have these unique orientations because our bodies are designed to function in our physical surroundings. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Ontological metaphor allows us to manipulate abstract units from our interior experience as though they were tangible objects.Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 25) establish the operation of the ontological metaphor by stating that "we can refer to, categorize, group, and quantify our experiences once we can identify them as entities or substances –and, by this means, reason about them."

2.5 What is a proverb?

Proverbs have been, are and will always be timeless. There are an infinite number and diversity of proverbs and proverbial expressions. Proverbs are ingrained in people's culture regardless of their age or national origin. All proverb users believe that they are a good combination of wisdom, experience, common sense, and most importantly, truth. From a linguistic standpoint, proverbs are a source of metaphor and figurative language. Metaphors and proverbs are comparable. They are proverbs or anecdotes meant to support formal education as well as informal, family, or folk education. Proverbs can be used to summarize or wrap up the presentation of a claim or thesis. They are meant to convey widely recognized precepts, which are frequently considered to be points of wisdom. They have more rhetorical strength when everyone involved is aware of the same proverbs. However, in cases when they require explanation due to unfamiliarity, this indicates a lack of shared baseline beliefs, attitudes, or presuppositions. Proverbs and proverbial expressions possess universal importance and attraction; the truths they convey and the messages they impart have gained popularity among all cultures for centuries, regardless of their regional differences, largely due to their significant impact. Their concise nature, along with the lessons they provide—which encompass general truths, guidance, cautions, and insights into human experiences—motivate each individual to behave and act in specific manners. It is not unexpected, therefore, that throughout history, proverbs that have thrived and greatly influenced the English language continue to be an active component of it, thereby enhancing our daily conversations. They transform language into a more vibrant and impactful means of communication. A reply carries more significance when we express not only our personal views but also a collective sentiment. Proverbs are valuable pieces of wisdom, combining insights and philosophy. They don't debate a matter or provide explanations; instead, they convey important truths in a powerful manner. They are crafted to provide practical knowledge to humanity. These expressions reflect great truths, deep contemplation, and a wealth of experience. Many proverbs are of unknown origin. They hold truth across various situations. Certain proverbs, such as 'Honesty is the best policy' and 'Cleanliness is next to godliness,' are irrefutable. These are universal sayings. Proverbs can be seen as companions, philosophers, and guides for common people. They shape our thoughts in numerous ways. Elders frequently use proverbs to clarify situations, which can significantly influence our mindset. Proverbs also serve to encapsulate life experiences, allowing listeners to derive their own conclusions and apply them to their future conduct. (Ehondor, 2017: 3-6)

2.6 Function of proverbs

1. It is a stylistic device, a figurative expression, that is employed to attain a desired semantic force.
2. They convey both emotional and intellectual attitudes, such as intent, pity, remorse, caution, congrats, attracting attention, and approbation, among others.
3. It is a strong and efficient tool for passing down a people's culture, social values, manners, and beliefs from one generation to the next.
4. The ethnography of the people is reflected in it.
5. It sheds light on a people's philosophy, moral principles, social ideals, and life criticism.
6. Proverbs pertaining to the survival of the particular civilization and the person who adopts or resides in it.
7. A society's traditions are strengthened via proverbs.
8.. It serves to highlight and support the ancient code of conduct's wisdom. (Ehondor, 2017: 6)

2.7 Characteristics of proverbs

In today's speech, proverbs continue to be important because they are used to reflect on commonplace events, teach, counsel, and moralize (Mieder, 1993:58). Because proverbs have special qualities, some of which are given below, they are frequently employed in diverse ways and modified to fit modern communication:

1. Proverbs are frequently employed in interpersonal communication.
2. With the exception of a few biblical proverbs that serve a didactic purpose, practically all proverbs depend on their context.
3. Typically, it focuses on standards and appropriate behavior.
4. It lacks logic.
5. People's experiences, human relationships, and interactions with nature are the basis and source of this empirical truth.
6. The language is metaphorical and characterized by succinctness.
7. It is a graphic statement that conveys an experience's reality.

8. It is typically regarded as an unquestionable fact and accepted as such.

9. Based on people's experiences, it is a wise phrase known as an aphorism.

10. It reflects people's societal ideals and sensibilities.

11. It serves as a way to achieve a number of socially desired objectives. (Ehondor, 2017: 6-8)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 The Model Adopted

Lakoff and Johnson''s *Metaphors We Live* by (1980) is chosen as a model for this study. It examines metaphor in the context of CMT. According to this model, metaphor is used frequently in daily life. CM is made up of two domains: a concrete source domain SD and an abstract or concrete target domain TD. Our capacity to transfer sensory-motor information from tangible realms where we have grounded experiences to TD is a prerequisite for our understanding of abstract concepts. Such an abstract field is simpler to comprehend. For instance, "No smoke without fire" is a metaphor. The TDs are "TRUTH and RUMOUR," whereas the SDs are "SMOKE" and "FIRE." People choose the source and target domains based on their prior experience. The relationship established between the two domains then leads to LMs. The mappings between the two domains are what create this relationship. The mappings in the proverb are as follows: RUMOUR, FIRE, SMOKE, TRUTH (Belkhir,2014:10).

3.2 Data Collection

The data is collected from internet and included (5) Iraqi proverbs which are used in Iraqi society. from these proverbs the readers will understand how society uses proverbs to convey ideas.

The proverbs are translated by the researcher and presented to a scientific committee consisting of: Prof. Israa Burhanuddin Abdurrahman (phD), Tikrit University/ College of Education for Women/ English Department and Asst. Prof. Muhammed Barjes Salman (phD), Tikrit University / College of Education for Humanities/ English Department.

3.3 Procedure of Analysis

1.Selecting the sample of analysis which is Iraqi proverbs.

2.Choosing a suitable model for analysis which is Lakoff and Johnson''s *Metaphors We Live* by (1980)

3.Analyzing (5) Iraqi proverbs according to the model.

4.Showing the results and discuss them.

3.4 Data Analysis

This section emphases on applying Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory to the analysis of the gathered data. Structural metaphor is used to represent the concept of plant which is used as a source domain. It investigates how one concept is structured in terms of another. The concept of plants is used to express different concepts like beauty, poverty and Patience.

١- مو كل الورد جوري

Not all flowers are Rose.

The linguistic meaning of this proverb is Rose refers to beauty because this flower is different and more beautiful than other flowers.

The hidden meaning of this proverb: do not deceive by appearances because not all persons are similar.

The concept of beauty expresses by using the concept of plant. This idea is expressed in the structural metaphor of *BEAUTY* by referring to the most beautiful flower جوري.

The conceptual metaphor of beauty in this proverb is how Iraqi people are understanding and referring to rose as a sign of *BEAUTY* and how every beauty thing is regarded as a rose in Iraq.

The two domains beauty and rose are linguistic metaphor and they together form part of the conceptual metaphor BEAUTY IS ROSE.

٢- يركض والعشا خباز

Overworked but no yield, or he works hard but his dinner is mallow.

The linguistic meaning of this proverb is Mallow refers to poverty because this plant is cheap and available to everyone.

The hidden meaning of this proverb: how a person works hard but still poor and gains nothing from his work only a cheap plant, also, how he has no luck and does not know how to work.

The concept of poverty expresses by using the concept of plant. This idea is expressed in the structural metaphor of *POVERTY* by referring to the cheapest plant خباز.

The conceptual metaphor of poverty in this proverb is how people are understanding and referring to mallow as a sign of *POVERTY* .

The two domains poverty and mallow are linguistic metaphor and they together form part of the conceptual metaphor MALLOW IS A SIGN TO POVERTY.

٣-مو كل مدعبل جوز .

Not every round thing is walnut.

The linguistic meaning of this proverb is walnut refers to every round thing according to its shape.

The hidden meaning of this proverb: do not judge anyone by their external appearance because most people have more than one personality. The concept of round expresses by using the concept of plant. This idea is expressed in the structural metaphor of *ROUND* by referring to the round plant جوز.

The conceptual metaphor of round in this proverb is how people are referring to walnut as a sign of *ROUND*.

The two domains round and walnut are linguistic metaphor and they together form part of the conceptual metaphor *ROUND* IS WALNUT.

٤- أصبر على الحصرم تاكل عنب

 Be patient with unripe grapes, you will eat it ripe.

Here, unripe and grapes works like cause and result.

The linguistic meaning of this proverb is grapes refer to patience because this plant takes a long time to be ripe.

The hidden meaning of this proverb: to be patient with things and take care of them until they give you what you want. Patience will lead to better results, and the metaphor of sour or unripe grapes as those things that you have to take care of them in order to become good for you.

 The concept of patience expresses by using the concept of plant. This idea is expressed in the structural metaphor of *PATIENCE* by referring to the plant عنب.

The conceptual metaphor of patience in this proverb is how people are referring to grapes as a sign of *PATIENCE*.

The two domains patience and grapes are linguistic metaphor and they together form part of the conceptual metaphor PATIENCE IS GRAPES.

٥- امر من الحنضل

More bitter than colocynth.The linguistic meaning of this proverb is Colocynth refers to everything that is bad or unbearable.The hidden meaning of this proverb: refer to something that is difficult, painful, sadness, bitter or unbearable. The concept of bitterness expresses by using the concept of plant. This idea is expressed in the structural metaphor of *BITTERNESS* by referring to the bitter plant حنضل. The conceptual metaphor of bitterness in this proverb is how people are referring to colocynth as a sign of *BITTERNESS*.

The two domains bitterness and colocynth are linguistic metaphor and they together form part of the conceptual metaphor BITTERNESS IS COLOCYNTH.

3. Conclusions

In the first part the focus was on metaphors, their literary and linguistic meaning, and their application. We selected well-known proverbs for the second part because we examined old Iraqi proverbs. The study's primary findings are that CMT, as a theory, can uncover hidden aspects of various meanings by interpreting abstract domains in terms of more tangible ones. To comprehend various abstract notions, the Iraqi dialect uses metaphorical expressions of plant terminology. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed. Experience and cultural values are the driving forces behind the conceptual metaphors of plants that have been examined in Iraqi proverbs. As a result, the second hypothesis is confirmed. So, different customs and cultural values of the regions and communities under study might be reflected in the use of CMT as an analytical model. To sum up, proverbs are eternal and continue to illuminate, cautioning us about dangers while guiding us in the right direction. Typically, utilizing them effectively can boost your confidence more than engaging in casual conversation.

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