Metaphor: a device of cognition

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Abstract- A metaphor is the expression of an understanding of one concept in terms of another concept, where some sort similarity or correlation between the two concepts exists. Or a metaphor is the understanding itself of one concept in terms of another which literally mean something different The perception of metaphor has changed significantly since the end of the 20th century. Metaphor is no longer considered to be a purely literary trope, and its boundaries and usage have changed to a large extent. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) were the pioneers in ascribing completely new characteristics to metaphor and changing its overall perception Metaphor, as a cognitive-semantic device, is able to reveal intuitive mechanisms of the thinking process, thus filling the gaps in the sphere of logically objective human knowledge and opens the possibility to describe abstract concepts of the human mind in terms. We can distinguish three kinds of metaphors: structural, ontological and orientational. In ontological metaphors experiences are like concrete objects or containers. (I was in a bad position). We can categorize, group and quantify them – and, by these ways, talk about them. Orientational metaphors is connected with orientation in space. Concepts are considered like physical orientation, for example goodness is up and sadness is badness is down. Structural metaphor is a kind of conceptual metaphors. By these metaphors, we understand complex and abstract expressions in simple words e.g. LIFE IS JOURNEY. It is in nature of language to conceptualize by structural metaphors, for example; peace is an abstract notion which is structured like a human: PEACE WILL END WAR. By this type of metaphor, we can think about abstract notions and structure the world.
I have lost my heart.

Index Terms- Cognition, Cognitive linguistics, abstract notations, kinds of metaphors

I. INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 20th century, linguistic theory of Ferdinand De Sassuar brought many changes in traditional approaches of language and separated his from historical linguistics. In America, behaviorism talked about the role of language in a human being behavior and language was withdrawing from the concreteness towards imitation; however, Noam Chomsky, an American linguist and one of the Blom feelds students, included human's mind and its language and temperament in syntactic structures and developed the Transformative-generative linguistics theory. According to Noam Chomsky, it is only human being who have the ability to talk. Man inherently has syntactic structures in his mind. Nonetheless, whatever society he is born to, man transforms this inherent structures into his native language, while expressing, he creates alternative for those deep structures on surface and this is the performance of speaker.

Chomsky considered language in the layer of sentences above the terms of "signify" and "signified" used by Sassuar. In 8th decade of 20th century; human cognition became very important. Thus G Lakoff and his fellows worked on human cognition. It was a new way to reveal relationship between mind and language. How does a man cognate? Is there a link between language and cognition?

According to cognitive linguistics, there are some primary sensory experiments, which are borrowed into language and language spreads in all over the language, especially for abstract notations. These are metaphor and metonym which are used. So metaphors have two domains: Source and target. Metaphors and metonyms are not limited to literary domain, but they are the basis of human cognition.

1- Metaphor it a way of conceptualization:

The direct meaning of metaphor is using one word in place of another, if there is connection of similarity (Darmal, 2010). According to cognitive linguists such as Lakoff and Johnson, this traditional definition of metaphor is not correct because metaphor is not a word, but it is a structural notion mostly used in daily life. Conventional language is metaphorical in nature and the metaphorical meaning is expressed by mapping which come from our primary embodied experiences. So metaphor is natural in language (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Because they consider both metonym and personification as conceptual metaphors.

We understand meaning of one domain in terms of anther by metaphor. For example, love does not have a concrete structure. Whatever it is, it is structured only via metaphors; therefore, love is a journey. While two lovers are talking about their love which is an abstract notion and not tangible directly:

 Our relationship has hit a dead-end street.
Look how a long, bumpy road
We can't turn back now.
We're at a crossroad.
We may have to separate our ways.
The relationship isn't going anywhere.
We're spinning our wheels.
The marriage is on the rocks.
 (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 44).

"Metaphor we live by" is famous for how human uses metaphors for cognition. This book is written by G Lakoff and Johnson. In the book we can find correct answers of how man cognates and how he uses metaphors in language.

According to cognitive linguistics, language makes relations between body and mind. Body is something material, having dimensions in space, so we specialized linguistic forms. As per cognitive linguistics, language forges relation between human's body and mind, and metaphors are important devices of these relations. Human, in the physical world, performs some intuitive experiments. These experiments get together with some other concepts in human's mind; with this, other concepts are created which can be capable of realization. For instance, our eyes cannot see ultra-violent colors, restricting our experiments. Ultimately, such limitation emerges in language, which shows us the connection among body, language and mind (Mohand, 9).

One way of human cognition is generalization. Man generalize finite experiences of his/her body in conceptualizing abstract notions.

As man's body has directions or dimensions; when he conceptualizes a notion by metaphors, basically he embodies a conception and makes it comprehensible. Embodiment means give spatial dimensions to a conception. For example: time is an abstract notion. Man treats it like a thing, place it in space and give dimensions, and then says:

Eid, a ritual day of Muslims, is approaching.
The Eid is over.
The past is something which is located behind man's body and future is in front.
These Examples show that man's body is an unanimated thing and the time is coming or has gone; so time has been conceptualized by a movable thing like a car or something else.
In these examples, we notice that human considers itself as static or motionless while Eid, which is a ritual, is treated as a "thing". It is resembled with the "car" metaphorically. Alike a car, it will pass by, because of this the conceptual understandings such as approaching, inching and passed are used for the car.
Occasionally, time does not move; but human body does.
Your time is coming.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are not arbitrary and accidental, but they are conventional and differ with each other from culture to culture. However, since humans' both objective experiences such as movements, place, respiration and etc. which are felt with feelings, and the concrete experiences such as time, emotions, light and so forth are common, we notice commonality between cognition and languages (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980)

We can categories metaphors in two domains: Source domain from where a metaphor comes out and target domain by which a metaphor is borrowed. Metaphors transfers a notion from source domain into the target one.
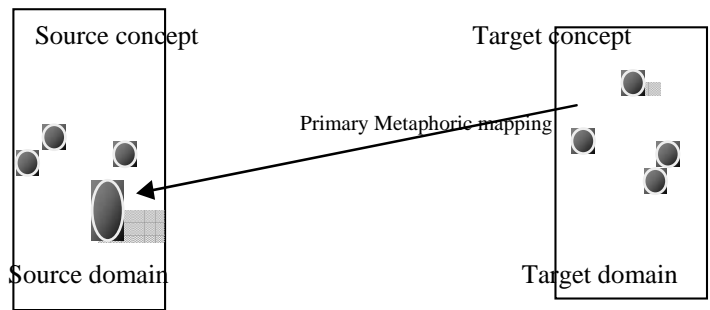
(Evans & Green, 2006: 308)

Thus, Lakoff indeed view metaphor as a connector or map between two domains in conceptual system, where many concepts are gathered. In other words, unlike the contrary theory, it is not words and phrases which make metaphors. As per this claim, the words and phrases duty is to awaken our minds for establishing connection between the conceptual domains (Hashimi, 1389).

If metaphor is not limited to literary texts and is including all language, then why we do not notice them? Because we have either become get used to it, or they have changed into a cliché.
There are three kinds of conceptual metaphors according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and each kind will be explained in details bellow.

2-1- Orientational Metaphors

Lakoff & Johnson recognized two kinds of metaphors (1980):
We have explored structural metaphors, cases where one concept is structured in terms of another. Now second kind of metaphor organizes a system of concepts and theses are orientational metaphors. Most of orientational metaphors shows the orientaions of space: In-on, up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 15).
There are some common principles for orientational metaphors:
Orientational metaphors shows a spatial orientation; for example, HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN; CONSCIOUS IS UP; UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN; MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN.

Similarly, some other concrete issues, such as 'time' is made conceptual through orientational metaphors. The future is seemed as a coming while the past is seemed as a passed place. Past time expressions such as 'yesterday' and 'last century' are considered places which we have already left; whereas 'tomorrow', 'upcoming year' and 'next century' are viewed places where we are going to.
There is a Pashto Landay, a 22-syllables two-lines poems in Pashto language:

ارمان به وکړي، وخت به تېر وي
بيا به جهان راپسي ګوري، نه به يمه

You will remorse, but the time will have been over. You will search the world, but I will be no longer available.

This is the reason that Lakoff says that man conceptualize abstract notions by sensible experiences.

2-2- Ontological metaphors

In These kinds of metaphors an abstract notion is conceptualized by existent objects in physical world. Lakoff's example here is inflation:

INFLATION IS AN ENTITY
Inflation is lowering our standard of living.
If there's much *more inflation,* we'll never survive. We need to *combat inflation.* A metaphor, where concepts are viewed as objective materials and the concepts are given attributes of objectives things. Then, we consider its taste of essence as an object. Lakoff and Johnson states "inflation" as an example:

Inflations caused a decrease in our lives' standard.
The increase of inflation will kill us.
We should struggle against it.
In these examples, inflation is like something that we can refer to it, quantify and identify a particular aspect of it. This is a cause, act with respect to it, and we think we can understand it. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:26).

In Pashto, we conceptualize education with ontological metaphors:

پوهه به مو د نړی سیال کړي
د پوهی لمن باید ونیسو
پوهه به مو ژوند روښانه کړي
پوهه ناپوهي ختموي

With education, we can compete the world.
We should follow education.
Education can enlighten our lives.
Education end illiteracy.
In these examples, education is dealt with like an object because of ontological metaphor.
Justice is an abstract notion as well, which is conceptualized by ontological metaphors:
Justice brings stability in society.
Justice make nations alive.
Justice recognizes criminal and innocent.
Life is also conceptualized with metaphors:
Life got out from my hand.
Life has to be spent.
Thereby life is not an object to experience directly; but understood with metaphor.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, besides metaphors there are some other devices which are used for conceptualizing. They are personification and metonymy. Personification and metonymy are related to literature, but Lakoff and Johnson have proved that they are used by human perception in general level. Lakoff includes personification and metonymy in ontological metaphors. In examples above we can see that life is animistic because of personification:

Life wants us to be happy.
War has destroyed our country: In this example, here war is treated like a man who can destroy a country.
If there is peace, a country develops.
In metonymy the part stands for the whole, as in the following:
In Pashto we say:

جنگ بېشمېره ککري وخوړي
سپینه مانی وايي، چي---

[War soiled countless heads.]
War killed infinite heads: heads for whole body.
White house said that….: white house for United States.

Ontological metaphors allow us to comprehend events, actions, activities, and states. Events and actions are conceptualized as objects, activities as sub-stances, states as containers by metaphors. Race is an event viewed as a discrete thing. Race is in space and time, and has boundaries.
So it is a CONTAINER OBJECT.
Participants like are objects, events like the start and finish and the activity of running (which is a metaphorical substance). Thus we can talk about race:
Are you *in* the race today? (race is like CONTAINER OBJECT)
Do you want to go to race? (race is OBJECT)
Have you ever *seen* the race? (race = OBJECT)
The *finish of* the race was great. (finish is EVENT
OBJECT within CONTAINER OBJECT)
There is *a lot of good running in* the race. (running as a
SUBSTANCE of CONTAINER)
I couldn't do *much sprinting* until the end. (sprinting as
SUBSTANCE)
In the middle of race, I ran out *of* energy. (race as CON-TAINER OBJECT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:31-32)
Here are more examples in Pashto:

فکر کې لاړم
په خبره کې وروغورځېدم
مور مې له کوما نه راووته

I fell in thinking: thinking is like a container.
I fall in (cut/entrap) his talking: talking is container which can be fallen in.
We experience many things, through sight and touch, as having distinct boundaries, and, when things have no distinct boundaries, we often project boundaries upon them—conceptualizing them as entities and often as containers (for example, forests, clearings, clouds, etc.) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:58)

2-3- Structural metaphors:

According to Lakoff and Johnson, a structural metaphor is that metaphor where one concept is understood and expressed in terms of another structured, defined concept. Most propositional metaphors are included in this type of metaphors. The examples of this metaphor are "argument-as-war" structural metaphor: (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:64)

You cannot defend of your stance.
He attacks the weak aspects of my stances.

I defeated him.
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.
He has never *won* an argument with me.
You don't agree? Then, shoot!
If you don't change your *strategy,* he'll *take you out.* He *shot down* all *of my* arguments.(5)

In a society where zero tolerance is not accepted, argument is like a war. Everybody tries hard to win this war, because this becomes the concern of honor. If we don't this argument as a war, we conceptualize it in other kinds of metaphors which could not be full of violence. In societies where the culture of tolerance is not available, argument is nothing but war. While body is hurt in war, prestige is damaged in argument. So, in war the body is defended whereas in arguments one's prestige. However, if prestige is disregarded in a discussion, it may be demonstrated in another terms instead of war.

In Pashto there is breaking an object like cup is used to conceptualize an abstract notion.

الف: بریالي پياله ماته کړه. ‏- 1
ب: بریالي ژمنه ماته کړه.
ج: بریالي روژه ماته کړه.

1- A: Baryali broke the cup.
B: Baryali broke his promise
C: Baryali broke his fast.

We can see that notion of breaking is linked with a notion of promise and fast which are abstracts, but we don't sense that these are metaphors because we have used them as much as we don't sense that they are metaphors. Now they are stereotypes in our life and we have become familiarized. If we use the notion of killing for promise and say:Baryali has killed his promise; then we consider that we hear something new and it is an literary metaphor. It says that literary function is not out of human perception. So literature is one function of language according to Jacobson as well and it is not only imagery, but perception of a poet and he looks at world on this way.

In Pashto we think heart is center of emotion; so we say, you broke my heart. We think, heart is broken like an object. We know in ancient period human life was full of myths and it had affected humans' concept and thinking about nature; therefore, this period is called animism. It is still remaining affection of animism in language. In language we use rising up and falling down for sun. In the mythic period, human thought, sun is like a man which is rising and falling down. When we say, sun died; it is a kind of metaphor and personification which shows the literary function of language.
In Pashto an unkind person is called ډبر زړے (stone hearted). Could heart be an abstract notion which has been conceptualized by stone in Pashto.

Lakoff & Johnson notes two kinds of notions in this kind of metaphor, one is *systematicity* and anther is *highlighting and hiding.* You saw in example *argument is war* that we had used the notions of war for argument. By using the conceptual system of argument it became possible to make a system for war. Metaphor is borrowing a notional system for another system, but we had not highlighted all notion of war, it means that we had hid some notions of war. It is called *highlighting & hiding.*
Proverbs, idioms and phrasal verbs are metaphors which have become stereotypes; so we can find their meaning in dictionary as well. They are died metaphors and tools of human perception. (Aspahni & Qurban Khani, 2015)

II. CONCLUSION

If we think deeply, we have been entangled in the network of metaphors. Language employs its duty through metaphors. Metaphors is not only adding artistic value to language and is not only limited to language, but it also has roots in our thoughts and actions. Lakoff and Johnson claims that the pictorial system of mankind' mind – on which our thoughts and activities are based— is originally metaphoric. These two linguists agree believe that metaphor bestow understanding to concrete concepts through tangible experiments. Thus, every metaphor has two domains, e.g. the source domain and the target domain. In the Pashto example of "Ali has a cold nature" or "I was not warmly welcome", the source domain is touching feeling "cold and war" whose purpose is concrete "sincerity" (Gul Fam & Fatima, 1381).

As was stated before, metaphor has relation with imagination in literature; however, imagination also helps us in understanding the world. Myths, which are the sole production of imagination, assisted human in world's comprehension. Nevertheless, this understanding was not reality, but human saw reality in figurative form – an issue which is applicable on the entire realization of a human being.

We perceive reality via language. As Jacques Lacan states, we have imprisoned by language. Language covers reality in metaphors, and we cannot live without language. The creation of language is the accomplishment of human being; however, this accomplishment is bound and restricted. Language is not so vast that can convey a concept however it is, this is why, it borrows words and express one concept in terms of others and tells us the that the argumentation about a reality does not refer to the reality itself, but it is emanated from the metaphorical language, because we do not perceive realities directly, but we comprehend them through figurative language and metaphors. Thus, we can state that imagination also has a role in realization of an issue.

Language is a metaphorical system. Literature tries to bring up its normal imagistic, emotional and musical function. In result we hear new metaphors. These new metaphors have emotional value for reader or hearer and convert a notion into a thought. Passage of time, they become stereotype and then we don't fell the newly of them, after that we think that we have found a direct way to reality.

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