

## ***Metaphor and Metonymy: A Contrastive Study With Reference to English-Arabic Translation***

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### ***Abstract***

This paper deals with two figures of speech namely, Metonymy and Metaphor. Owing to their importance in every language, we have tackled these two figures to highlight some points of differences and similarities and to verify that metonymy is less suggestive than metaphor as far as meaning is concerned. Moreover, we try to draw attention to metonymy, a figure of speech overlooked over the time. Furthermore, we mention some points related to the translation of each of these two figures of speech. Ten sentences are selected from different books to be our sample, and given to four translators who produce nearly similar translations for each sentence. We have tackled only the similar renditions in our analysis. After examining both figures, we have found out that metonymy is less suggestive and difficult than metaphor as far as meaning and translation are concerned. This is so because the former has a direct association with the tenor, the vehicle and the

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ground, whereas the latter has a propriety sharing association between these three items, and in this case the nature of the ground cannot be predictable.

### ***1.Introduction***

Metaphor is one of the main types of figures of speech; it is a stylistic feature, which almost no utterance can escape. Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher, defines metaphor in terms of borrowing meaning of one object or thing and transferring it to another. He states that 'metaphor consists of giving a thing a name that belongs to something else' (Cited in Hawkes, 1972:7;Preminger et al, 1974:490). Therefore, metaphor for Fowler (1974:204) is a departure of a word from one sphere to another new one. This definition fits not only metaphor but also most other tropes, notably metonymy. Therefore the aim of this study is to make a distinction between the two figures of speech: metaphor and metonymy, showing that metonymy is less suggestive than metaphor, drawing attentions to metonymy, and pointing out some differences in translating these two figures of speech.

Modern rhetoricians and linguists, normally put these two figures of speech on equal footing and base the distinction on the difference between tenor (new figurative sense) and the vehicle (conventional sense) (Corbett, 1977:106;Halliday, 1985:317;Snell-Hornby, 1987:120;Su, 1994:134;Yule, 1996:122). As for Jakobson

(1956:76), metaphor is as a manifestation of the language -user's faculty for selection and substitution and of metonymy is a manifestation of his faculty for combination and contexture. Cooper (1986:135-39) tackles Jakobson's argument, which consists of transferring contiguity from referents of words to linear contiguity between words in a sentence. For instance, there are no metonymic relations between 'let's' and 'finish' and 'the juice' in " Let's finish the juice" (Warren, 1995:137). However, both metaphor and metonymy would represent types of paradigmatic substitution. That is, instead of 'juice' we may have bottle (metonymy) or liquid gold (metaphor) (Ibid: 138).

## ***2. Metaphor, Metonymy and Translation***

### ***2.1 Points of Differences & Similarities***

Metaphor and metonymy have much in common. Both represent figurative uses of words, i.e. they involve a shift away from their conventional literal meaning to a non-literal one (Leech, 1969:152; Palmer, 1980:103). They both have a vehicle and a tenor, or, to use McGlone's (1996:564) terminology, a topic and vehicle. In both types of tropes, the interpreter must discover a motivation for this shift of meaning, i.e. s/he will have to establish the ground, or to use McGlone's terminology again, for a sharing abstract correspondence between the topic and the vehicle concept domains. More precisely, this abstract correspondence is the perceived

connection between the word's established meaning and its new referent(s) or meaning(s). For Yule (2003:122) however, metonymy is a type of relationship based on a close connection in every-day use. He (Ibid.) mentioned three types of relations: Container-Content (bottle-coke; can-juice), a whole-part relation (car-wheel; house-roof) and representative-symbol (king-crown; president-the White House).

If we go back, however, to the shift of meaning proposed by most scholars, we find that resemblance and contiguity occur respectively in the grounds of metaphor and metonymy. They can also be found in other linguistic units notably between the two nouns in noun - noun compounds as "They went to the flower shop"; "I have a severe headache". Hence, if we look more closely at metonymic and metaphorical grounds, we will notice that they are fundamentally different and that these differences have far-reaching consequences.

## ***2.2 Views on the Translation of Metonymy & Metaphor***

Being two of the most important figures of speech, metaphor and metonymy realize a high degree of communicative value in addition to their aesthetic purpose (cf. Newmark, 1982:84). In most cases, a native language reader/hearer may easily perceive the communicative values and the potential meanings of these figures of speech that reflect the experiences of his surrounding. These figures

of speech may raise several difficulties to a different reader who is already the product of a different culture and society (Nida, 1964:219). Therefore, the task of the translator is to convey the SL image and to find an appropriate TL one, which does not clash with TL norms and culture.

Larson (1984:114; 252) proposes three possible steps for translating metonymy: the first one is translating the sense of the metonymous word. The second proposed step is to retain the word in the original with its sense as in word with its sense. The third step is to replace the SL figurative word (i.e. the metonymy) by a suitable metonym in the TL (cf. Newmark, 1982:125). If we look now at metaphor, we see that there is an overlap between the steps proposed for metonymy and those for metaphor.

However, Newmark (1982:86) proposes seven procedures to handle metaphor. These procedures are:

- 1 .Reproducing the same image.in the TL.
- 2.Replacing the image in the SL with standard TL image.
- 3.Translating metaphor by simile.
- 4.Translating metaphor by simile plus sense.
- 5.Converting metaphor to sense.
- 6.Deletion.
- 7.Same metaphor combined with sense.

### 3.Data Analysis

There are different types of metaphor and metonymy, but we will mention only the main ones: Locative, Possessive, Causal, Representational and Compositional for metonymy and Dead, Cliche, Stock and Original for metaphor. Our discussion will tackle the tenor, the ground the vehicle and the interpretation. Therefore, let us examine the nature of grounds and first turn our attention to the metonymic relation.

1. He drank the whole *bottle* (Yule, 1996:122)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground -</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>interpretation</i>
Locative /Space	that which is in	the bottle	i.e. the liquid (Coke)

2. Your *hour* has come (Larson, 1984:112)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>interpretation</i>
Locative /time	that which occurs at an	hour	i.e. the time you take an exam

3. Mrs. Grundy frowns on *blue jeans*. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:35)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>interpretation</i>
Possessive	Those who have	blue jeans	i.e. students

4.Keep your *eye* on the ball (Halliday, 1985:317)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>interpretation</i>
Causal	that which is caused/made by	eye	i.e. gazing/looking

5.The *Times* has not arrived at the press conference yet.(Lakoff &Johnson,1 980:35)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>interpretation</i>
Representational	who represents	Times	i.e. the reporter from the Time

6. I have some *oils* by a famous painter.(Warren,1995: 140)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Compositional	those which are made of	oil	i.e. paintings

Now we turn to apply similar procedures for metaphor; and use the types proposed by Newmark (1982:48):

7. The *mouth* of the bottle.(Cited in Sa'eed,1999:18 )

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Dead	that which is like	a mouth	i.e. top of the bottle

8. He is burned up (Burbules et al, 1989:104)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Cliche	that which is like	burning up	i.e. becoming very angry

9. He is a pig (Naji, 1998:31)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Stock	somebody who is like a	Pig	i.e. dirty

10. Close at hand (Naji, 1998:25)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Tenor/ground -</i>	<i>vehicle</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Original	something is like	hand	i.e. very near

Let us now deal with the translation of these two figures of speech. The analysis will be restricted to the overlapping procedures between those proposed by Larson (1984:114) and those by Newmark (1982:86). These procedures are:

1. Replacing the SL image by standard TL image.
2. Converting the SL image to sense.
3. Same image combined with sense.

1. He drank the whole *bottle* (Yule, 1996:122)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Type of translation</i>
Metonymy	شرب القنينة بأكملها	Replacing the SL image by standard TL image



2. Your *hour* has come (Larson, 1984:112)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Type of translation</i>
Metonymy	حان موعدك لتأدية الامتحان	Converting to sense

3. Mrs. Grundy frowns on *blue jeans*. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:35)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Type of translation</i>
Metonymy	تُبدي السيدة جرندي رفضها لارتداء الطلاب الجينز	Converting to sense

4. Keep your *eye* on the ball (Halliday, 1985:317)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Type of translation</i>
Metonymy	لا تدع عينك تفارق الكرة	Replacing the SL image by standard TL image

5. The *Times* has not arrived at the press conference yet. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:35)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Type of translation</i>
Metonymy	لما يأتي مراسل ألتا يمز إلى المؤتمر الصحفي بعد	Same image., combined with sense

6. I have some *oils* by a famous painter. (Warren, 1995: 140)

Type	Translation	Type of translation
Metonymy	امتلك بعض اللوحات الزيتية لرسام شهير	Converting to sense

7. The *mouth* of the bottle. (Cited in Sa'eed, 1999: 18)

Type	Translation .	Type of translation
Metaphor	فم القنينة / فوهة القنينة	Replacing the SL standard TL image

8. He is *burned up* (Burbutes et al, 1989: 104)

Type	Translation1	Type of translation
Metaphor	انه يستشيط غضباً / انه يغلي غضباً	Replacing the SL standard TL image

9. He is a *pig* (Naji, 1998: 31)

Type	Translation	Type of translation
Metaphor	انه خنزير / انه كالخنزير	Replacing the SL image by standard TL image

10. Close at *hand* (Naji, 1998: 25)

Type	Translation	Type of translation
Metaphor	قريب جداً / في متناول اليد	Same image combined with sense

#### ***4. Discussion***

As far as metonymy is concerned, we see that each sentence has a contiguity relation among the tenor, ground and vehicle. This relation is closely constructed among these three items on the basis of association which in turn helps the reader/hearer to grasp the meaning of these metonymic sentences directly as we have seen in sentences 1-6. Whereas for metaphor, we notice that the interpretations proposed for each metaphorical word are not very clear in the sense that they do not reveal the true nature of the association among tenor, ground and vehicle. So the reader/hearer should specify in what respect X is like Y.

As for translating these two figures of speech, we see that there is only one translation for each metonymic sentence as in 1-6. This explains that the translator faces no problem in reproducing the SL image in the TL. So it is obvious that the TL reader/hearer is able to grasp the meaning of the SL image with no difficulty through making an easy association between X and Y. The converse is true in the case of metaphor; the translator looks quite uncertain about the exact meaning of the SL image. He cannot establish a definite association between X and Y. Therefore, he produces more than one translation for each sentence as in 7-10. Moreover, the translator resorts to replacing the SL image by a TL

one, which in most cases comprises a difficulty on the part of the reader/hearer who is unable to determine the nature of the association between tenor, vehicle and ground. However, no one can overlook the role of context to first understand the metaphorical image and then to translate it. Both metaphor and metonymy are translated into sense and sometimes into image combined with sense. These two procedures as in sentences 2,3,5,6 and 10 give an explanation of the SL image in each translated sentence. This occurs combined with reproducing the SL image in the TL, which in turn lessens the effect of the SL image (cf. Sa'eed, 1999:71).

#### ***4. Conclusions***

In the light of the analysis of the two figures of speech : metaphor and metonymy, this paper makes a clear distinction between these two figures on the basis of the associations among tenor, vehicle and ground. We can say now that in the case of metonymy there is a direct association between X and Y i.e. we may associate X with Y . This association is found on the basis of a relation between X and Y, whereas in the case of metaphor, there is also an association between the three items. But this association is found on a sharing relation between X and Y. Thus, there is a difference between these two associations.

However, metonymic associations differ from metaphorical associations in that they involve a particular relation between two

definite phenomena, whereas metaphorical associations comprise one or more features. This reveals also that grounds in the case of metaphor are not relations, as in the case of metonymy, but actually properties shared by the vehicle and the tenor referents i.e. they probably consist of more than one property. Moreover, in the case of metonymy, the ground will be one of a set of relations, whereas in metaphor, the nature of the ground is truly unpredictable. This, however, makes metonymy less suggestive than metaphor. As for the translation of these two figures of speech, we have found out that in the case of metonymy the translator gives one definite translation for each sentence due to the easiness in which s/he can make an association between X and Y.

Hence, the translator of metonymic sentences may face less difficulty in translating them into TL language than in those involving metaphor. Moreover, the TL reader/hearer will easily perceive the SL image. Metaphor, on the contrary, constitutes a problem for the translator as it is seen in our data analysis. This makes him produce more than one translation for he is not quite sure which one is appropriate. It can also be assumed that the straightforward associations of metonymy probably explain why linguists, who in turn show more interest in metaphor, overlook it.

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## ملخص

# الاستعارة والكناية: دراسة مقارنة مع الإشارة إلى الترجمة

## من الإنكليزية إلى العربية

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يتناول البحث ضربين من الصور البلاغية ألا وهما الاستعارة والكناية نظراً لأهميتها في اللغة. فقد سلط البحث الضوء على بعض أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه وذلك للبرهنة على أن الكناية أقل إحياء من الاستعارة من حيث المعنى. البحث لفت الانتباه إلى الكناية لكونها إحدى الصور البلاغية التي حظيت بقليل من الاهتمام عبر الزمن. هذا فضلاً عن أننا أشرنا إلى بعض النقاط المتعلقة بترجمة كليهما. تم اختيار عشر جمل من مصادر مختلفة وأعطيت إلى أربعة مترجمين قاموا بترجمة هذه الجمل بشكل متشابه تقريباً. وتم تحليل التشابه منها فقط. وبعد تحليل ودراسة كلا الصورتين البلاغيتين تم التوصل إلى أن الكناية هي أقل إحياء وأقل صعوبة في الترجمة من الاستعارة. ففي الكناية هناك ترابط مباشر بين المشبه والمشبه به ووجه الشبه بينما ما يحدث في الاستعارة هو ترابط ما بين هذه العناصر الثلاثة على أساس الصفات المشتركة وفي هذه الحالة ليس بالإمكان معرفة وجه الشبه على وجه التحديد مما يجعل الاستعارة أكثر صعوبة في الترجمة وأكثر تعدداً في المعنى.

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