

A STUDY OF METAPHOR IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This study, entitled “*A Study of Metaphor in Everyday Language*,” examines various types of metaphor in Pashto oral literature. Contrary to classical rhetoric, which regards metaphor merely as a literary device and poetic ornament, this study demonstrates that metaphor is deeply rooted in the human mind, cognition, and thought processes, functioning through the mapping of information from one concrete concept onto another target concept.

Drawing upon examples from everyday Pashto discourse, metaphors are first classified into three principal categories: **orientational, ontological, and structural metaphors**.

Simultaneously, from the perspective of rhetorical reinforcement, **explicit (tasrīḥī), implicit (makniyyah), sensory, intellectual, extended (murashahah), and stripped (mujarradah) metaphors** are analyzed through living examples drawn from actual language use. The findings of this study reveal that the widespread and largely unconscious presence of metaphor in everyday Pashto not only facilitates communication and comprehension by rendering abstract concepts more concrete and accessible, but also reflects the distinctive cultural worldview and cognitive categorization patterns of the Pashtun people.

Keywords: Everyday discourse, metaphor, conceptual metaphor.

Introduction

الحمد لله الذي خلق الانسان علمه البيان والصلوة والسلام على محمد و على آله واصحابه اجمعين

Praise be to Allah, Who created humankind and taught them eloquence; and may blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family, and all his companions.

Language is not merely a means of communication and the transmission of ideas; rather, it serves as a medium for human cognition, the organization and processing of information, and the mental representation of the external world.

Traditionally, within various schools of classical rhetoric and literary studies, **metaphor** was regarded solely as an aesthetic and literary device—a stylistic ornament employed by speakers and writers to embellish discourse and enhance poetic expression. This traditional perspective, whose roots can be traced back to Aristotle, viewed literary language as distinct from everyday language.

However, after 1980, when **George Lakoff** and **Mark Johnson** investigated the structures of everyday and spoken language, a new paradigm emerged within linguistics. Their research demonstrated that metaphor is not confined to literary texts; rather, it is deeply embedded in human nature, cognition, and thought, forming a fundamental basis for everyday perception and reasoning.

In everyday language, metaphor arises when individuals employ a concrete and experiential concept in order to comprehend an abstract, complex, or intangible one. Owing to its rich cultural heritage and predominantly rural social structure, the Pashto language exhibits a remarkably broad and diverse range of conceptual, rhetorical, and cognitive metaphors in daily discourse.

Within Pashto oral traditions, people consciously and unconsciously employ various forms of metaphor on a daily basis to express their worldview. Nevertheless, these metaphors have, until now, received very limited systematic investigation from the perspectives of both contemporary cognitive linguistics and classical rhetoric.

Significance and Necessity of the Study

Although numerous studies in Pashto literature and classical rhetoric have examined the figurative and rhetorical dimensions of **metaphor (isti'ārah)** and **metonymic expression (majāz)**, little attention has been paid to the study of metaphor in everyday Pashto language. The significance of the present study lies in demonstrating how Pashtuns employ their physical and sensory experiences such as travel, money, war, and natural phenomena as metaphoric frameworks for understanding abstract and spiritual concepts such as life, time, anger, and fortune, thereby facilitating communication and comprehension.

Research Objectives

Main Objectives

1. To identify and define metaphor in everyday Pashto language.
2. To examine the application of metaphor in everyday Pashto language.

Secondary Objective

1. To investigate the use of **conceptual metaphor (mafḥūmī isti'ārah)** in everyday discourse.

Review of Previous Literature

Research concerning the place and significance of metaphor in everyday discourse may generally be divided into two broad phases. These include studies conducted in non-Pashto languages as well as those related to Pashto everyday discourse and literature.

First Phase

1. The earliest known perspective on metaphor is found in the classical and traditional discussions of **Aristotle**. In his works *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, Aristotle regarded metaphor merely as an artistic device employed for rhetorical embellishment, poetic imagery, and the beautification of discourse (Saeed, 2009, p. 358). This perspective remained dominant in literary criticism for centuries until the twentieth century. In 1936, **I. A. Richards**, in his influential work *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, argued that metaphor is not confined to words alone but operates within the exchange of ideas and constitutes a complex process of thought.

2. In 1980, **George Lakoff** and **Mark Johnson** published their renowned book *Metaphors We Live By*. They demonstrated that the ordinary systems of human thought and action are fundamentally metaphorical in nature.

According to their theory, conceptual metaphors are not restricted to poetry and literature; rather, they permeate every aspect of everyday language and cognition.

3. In 2005, **Zoltán Kövecses**, in his book *Metaphor in Culture*, drew attention to those dimensions of metaphor that are linked to cultural and social diversity. He demonstrated how physical and geographical environments contribute to the formation and variation of metaphoric structures.

Second Phase

4. In their scholarly articles, **Ali Golfam** and **Arsalan Shirin** (1387 A.H. Solar / 2008–2009) examined cognitive linguistics as a new framework for the organization and processing of information. They also applied the cultural dimensions of Lakoff's theory to Persian-language studies.

5. In his work *An Evaluation of Defamiliarization Phenomena in the Light of Semantics*, **Kourosh Safavi** (1390 A.H. Solar / 2011–2012) explored the relationship between everyday language and literary language. He analyzed numerous examples of **orientational**, **ontological**, and **structural metaphors**, thereby contributing to the understanding of metaphor from a cognitive perspective.

6. In his work *Khwāga Zhaba (Sweet Language)*, **Abdul Rahim Muslim Dost** (1379 A.H. Solar / 2000–2001) discussed metaphor and related rhetorical issues. However, he made only limited use of examples drawn from everyday discourse, to such a small extent that they can scarcely be considered representative.

7. In his work *Bayān Pohana (Rhetoric)*, **Mohammad Ibrahim Hamkar** (1398 A.H. Solar / 2019–2020) also addressed various issues related to metaphor. Nevertheless, he did not make extensive use of examples from everyday spoken language.

Research Questions

- Does metaphor exist in everyday discourse?
- Are all categories of metaphor applicable in everyday discourse?
- Which type of metaphor is most frequently used in everyday discourse?

Definition of Metaphor

The term **metaphor** (*isti'ārah*) is derived from the Arabic verbal form *istif'āl* and literally refers to borrowing one word in place of another. In rhetorical terminology, metaphor occurs when a word is used in a figurative sense rather than its literal meaning on the basis of a perceived similarity between two entities.

Among all forms of figurative expression (*majāz*), metaphor occupies a privileged position and is particularly prevalent in literary language. If the elements of comparison namely the particle of comparison, the point of resemblance, and the compared object are removed from a simile, the simile is transformed into a metaphor. Consequently, every metaphor is fundamentally grounded in an underlying simile.

From a structural perspective, simile and metaphor are closely related. In Western rhetorical terminology, metaphor is often described as the distilled essence of simile. In other words, a simile becomes so condensed and refined that only one element remains explicitly stated. While a simile merely asserts similarity, a metaphor asserts identity. A poet does not say, "The beloved's curls are like hyacinths"; rather, he declares, "The beloved's curls are hyacinths" (Hamkar, 1398, p. 176).

The Use of Metaphor in Everyday Language

The use of metaphor in everyday language is closely related to human cognition. Some individuals readily perceive metaphors, whereas others seldom pay attention to them. Once we begin to examine metaphor in everyday speech, the discussion inevitably enters the domain of **cognitive linguistics**, a theoretical framework that regards language as a tool for the organization, processing, and representation of knowledge and information (Golfam & Shirin, 1387, p. 97).

Within cognitive linguistics, one of the most fundamental concepts is **metaphor**, whether it occurs in spoken or written language. In the past, metaphor was viewed merely as a literary ornament or rhetorical device employed to beautify speech and literary expression. However, after 1980, when Lakoff and Johnson investigated the manifestation of metaphor in everyday spoken and colloquial language, it became evident that metaphor is not restricted to literary discourse. Rather, it is deeply rooted in the human mind and forms a fundamental basis of thought itself.

Today, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) view that metaphor constitutes one of the principal mechanisms through which human beings categorize the world and engage in thought has been widely accepted among cognitive linguists (Saeed, 2009, p. 357).

Metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon; it may also be regarded as a conceptual, social, cultural, neurological, and embodied phenomenon that operates simultaneously across all of these levels (Kövecses, 2005, p. 9).

Two broad perspectives have emerged regarding the place of metaphor in language.

The first is the **traditional (classical) perspective**, which traces back to Aristotle.

According to this view, metaphor serves primarily as a rhetorical ornament and a means of embellishing discourse, particularly in poetry and literature. The theory of "literary language" associated with this tradition considers metaphor a deviation from ordinary language.

The second is the **romantic perspective**, which views metaphor as a means of understanding and experiencing the world. According to this view, literary language and aesthetically enhanced language are inseparably connected. From the romantic perspective, metaphor plays a central role in concept formation and reasoning; therefore, no rigid distinction is accepted between everyday language and literary language (Safavi, 1390, p. 369).

Conceptual Metaphor

Conceptual metaphors are embedded within the human mind and constitute one of the foundations of thought. In other words, metaphor should be understood primarily as a cognitive phenomenon rather than merely a linguistic one; linguistic expressions are simply manifestations of this deeper cognitive process.

Consider the following expressions:

1. "I found myself at a crossroads in life."
2. "The path of life is full of twists and turns."
3. "He still does not know his destination in life."

All of these are linguistic metaphors derived from a broader conceptual metaphor: *Life is a Journey*.

These everyday expressions point to a single conceptual framework in which life is understood through the structure of a journey.

In everyday language, metaphor enables the understanding of one conceptual domain through another. The conceptual domain from which the metaphor is drawn is called the **source domain**, while the conceptual domain being understood through it is called the **target domain**.

For example, in the conceptual metaphor “*Life is a Journey*,” the concept of *life* is abstract, broad, and mentally complex. To make it more comprehensible, speakers draw upon the concept of *journey*, which is concrete, experiential, and familiar. In this metaphor, **journey** functions as the source domain, while **life** serves as the target domain.

Types of Conceptual Metaphor

Conceptual metaphors may be divided into three categories:

1. Orientational Metaphors
2. Ontological Metaphors
3. Structural Metaphors

Orientational Metaphors

Orientational metaphors are conceptual metaphors grounded in spatial orientation, such as:

- a. up–down
- b. inside–outside
- c. front–back
- d. above–below

Like other metaphors, these are deeply rooted in human experience and everyday language.

They arise from our constant experience of inhabiting physical space and perceiving ourselves within bodily and spatial frameworks.

Examples include:

1. Knowledge elevates; Ignorance degrades.

Knowledge is metaphorically associated with light, intellect, and elevation, whereas ignorance is associated with the opposite qualities.

2. Happiness uplifts; Sadness depresses.

Happiness is associated with an uplifted posture and vitality, while sadness is associated with lowered physical and emotional states.

3. Success climbs; Failure sinks.

Success elevates a person because it signifies the attainment of goals, whereas failure is conceptualized in the opposite direction.

In summary, the human mind assigns spatial orientations such as *up* and *down* (elevate, uplift, and climb and degrade, depress, and sink) to abstract concepts like knowledge, happiness, and success in order to facilitate understanding and make communication more concrete and meaningful (Safavi, 1390, p. 369).

Since metaphor is rooted in culture, spatial orientations may vary from one culture to another. For example, one culture may conceptualize the future as being “ahead,” while another may conceptualize it as being “behind” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 14).

Ontological Metaphors

In **ontological metaphors**, abstract phenomena and experiences are mapped onto physical objects or substances, making them easier to understand and conceptualize. These metaphors are grounded in our experience with physical objects and encourage us to perceive events, actions, emotions, and thoughts as though they were tangible entities (the same reference: p. 25).

Consider the following everyday expressions:

- I am looking for an opportunity.

- The opportunity slipped away.
- I obtained a good opportunity.
- I flushed my time away.
- I spent my time unnecessarily.
- I spent my life doing this.
- I gave away my life for it in vain.
- I can still taste the sweetness of his words.
- Sorrows drowned me.
- I released my anger.
- So-and-so keeps my secret.
- So-and-so sold his honor.
- That idea slipped from my mind.

Whenever we use verbs such as **bring, lose, buy, sell, keep, throw away, or consume** with regard to non-material phenomena, we are simplifying and concretizing abstract experiences through ontological metaphor.

For instance, in the expression “I am looking for an opportunity,” *opportunity* is treated as if it were a tangible object that can be searched for, acquired, or lost.

One important subtype of ontological metaphor is the **container metaphor**. In this type, abstract experiences are conceptualized as containers. Examples include:

- I laughed from the bottom of my heart.
- So-and-so has a big heart.
- My chest is filled with sorrow.
- My secret is hidden in my heart.
- The matter remained in my heart.
- I gave it up for him.
- My heart has turned dark toward him.
- His heart feels tight.
- Don't butt in.
- I spent all my life working.
- He has gone into deep thought.
- Come out of grief and anxiety.
- Once again, I fell into great conflict and headache.

In everyday Pashto, words such as **full, empty, tight, inside, outside, deep, fall into, and come out of** indicate that the mind automatically employs the container metaphor. Concepts such as *heart, speech, time, thought, anxiety, and conflict* are treated as containers possessing depth, volume, and boundaries.

Another important subtype of ontological metaphor is **personification**. In personification, a non-living object or physical phenomenon is represented as a human being. This allows us to understand many entities and phenomena through human characteristics, behaviors, and actions.

Consider the following examples:

- Circumstances have consumed my heart.
- The earth put on a green cloak.
- The sky frowned.
- The mountains put on white garments.
- Poverty consumes a person's determination.

- Fortune has turned its face away from me.
- Sorrow consumed me.
- Time is fleeing.

In all of the above examples, *circumstances*, *earth*, *sky*, *mountains*, *poverty*, *fortune*, *sorrow*, and *time* are non-human entities. Nevertheless, they are assigned human characteristics such as *consuming*, *wearing clothes*, *frowning*, *possessing determination*, *turning away one's face*, and *running away*. This process is known as **personification**, and it is extensively employed in everyday language.

Similarly, consider the following metaphors:

- Inflation is our country's greatest enemy.
- Inflation is devouring the nation's wealth.

Here, **inflation** is portrayed as a human being capable of hostility and devouring.

Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphors involve mapping the structure of a source domain onto a target domain. Through this process, speakers become capable of understanding an abstract and intangible concept by means of a more concrete and familiar one (Ma'sumi & Kurdbacheh, 1389, p. 79).

A clear example is the conceptual metaphor: *Argument is War*

In this metaphor, participation in an argument is understood through the framework of warfare. The following linguistic metaphors are all derived from this conceptual structure:

- Your claims are indefensible.
- He attacked the weak points in my argument.
- I demolished his argument.
- I defeated him. (Hashimi, 1389, p. 119)

The participants in an argument are thus conceptualized as combatants, and the exchange of ideas is understood in terms of conflict and victory.

Another structural metaphor is:

Life is a Journey. Within this framework, all the elements of a journey such as a point of departure, a route, twists and turns, companions, provisions, and a destination are mapped onto the process of life.

For example:

- I encountered many twists and hardships on the road of life.
- He is still in the first stage of his life.
- The caravan moved on, and he was left behind in life.
- Thank God, he reached his goal and destination in life.

Another common structural metaphor is:

Time is Money. In modern culture, the conceptual structure associated with money and capital such as profit, loss, expenditure, saving, theft, and waste is directly applied to time.

Examples include:

- Do not waste your time; it is very valuable.
- Take full advantage of this opportunity.
- He consumed a great deal of my time for nothing.
- I must save some of my time for study.

In all these examples, the metaphors are used to comprehend abstract experiences through conceptual frameworks derived from everyday physical and social realities such as travel, money, and warfare.

Explicit Metaphor (*Isti'ārah Taṣrīhiyyah*)

An **explicit metaphor** occurs when only the metaphorical image (*musta'ār minhu*) is mentioned, while the actual referent (*musta'ār lahu*) is omitted. This type of metaphor is also referred to as a **declarative** or **direct metaphor** (Muslim Dost, *Khawāḡa Zhaba*, p. 141).

Examples from Everyday Language

1. My lion has returned from his journey.

Literal meaning:

A lion is a wild predatory animal.

Metaphorical usage:

When a father or mother refers to a brave, capable son who has returned home from travel or work as a "Lion". Here the son is omitted and is directly referred to as a *lion* in order to emphasize courage and strength.

2. The moon came to my house today.

Literal meaning: The moon is a luminous celestial body in the sky.

Metaphorical usage: This expression is used when referring to an exceptionally beautiful guest, groom, or bride.

Explanation: The actual person is not mentioned; instead, the person is directly called a *moon* in order to emphasize extraordinary beauty.

3. That clever fox has stolen the chicken again.

Literal meaning: A fox is a cunning and crafty animal.

Metaphorical usage: In a village, a person who secretly steals fruit, firewood, or other belongings may be referred to as a *fox*.

Explanation: The thief's identity is concealed and replaced by the image of a fox, thereby highlighting his cunning nature.

4. Someone else captured that gazelle.

Literal meaning: A gazelle is a beautiful and swift wild animal.

Metaphorical usage: When a modest and beautiful young woman marries another person, a disappointed suitor may utter such a statement.

Explanation: The girl is omitted and explicitly represented by the image of a gazelle.

5. "Do not speak to that wall; it is useless."

Literal meaning: A wall is an inanimate structure made of mud or bricks and possesses neither ears nor reason.

Metaphorical usage: When a person is extremely insensitive, unintelligent, or incapable of understanding what is being said.

Explanation: The unintelligent individual is not mentioned directly but is referred to as a *wall* in order to emphasize his lack of responsiveness.

Simpler Examples of Explicit Metaphor

1. A mountain of patience.

A highly patient person is compared to a mountain because a mountain remains steadfast in the face of winds, rain, and hardships, just as a patient person endures difficulties with perseverance.

2. The lamp (light) of the house

A person who brings happiness, comfort, and blessing to the household is compared to a lamp because a lamp illuminates a home, just as that person brings prosperity and warmth.

3. An ocean of knowledge.

A great scholar is compared to an ocean because, just as an ocean is vast and full of water, the scholar possesses extensive and abundant knowledge.

4. He has a heart of stone.

A merciless person is compared to a stone because a stone is hard and unyielding; likewise, such a person's heart lacks compassion and tenderness.

5. He is his father's arm.

A helpful and supporting son is compared to an arm because the arm is an instrument of work and strength, just as that individual assists and supports his father.

In all the examples, the metaphors are explicit metaphors because *mountain, lamp, ocean, stone, arms* are used explicitly as metaphorical images (*musta'ār minhu*), while the actual referent (*musta'ār lahu*) _ a patient person, a helpful person, a wise person, a merciless person, or a helpful person _ is omitted. (Rezaei, 1392, p. 91)

6. The Dove of Peace

Peace is compared to a dove because the dove is widely regarded as a symbol of tranquility, harmony, and peace:

Intended referent (*musta'ār lahu*): Peace. Borrowed image (*musta'ār minhu*): Dove, Common attribute: Peacefulness and tranquility.

7. A Market Wolf

A deceitful and oppressive person is compared to a wolf because, just as a wolf is predatory and merciless, such an individual harms and exploits others.

Intended referent: An oppressive or deceitful person, Borrowed image: Wolf, Common attribute: Oppression, cruelty, and harmful behavior.

8. His Heart Is a Mirror

The heart is compared to a mirror because, just as a mirror is clear and polished, that person's heart is pure, sincere, and untainted.

Intended referent: Heart. Borrowed image: Mirror. Common attribute: Purity and clarity (Kadkani, 1386, p. 118)

9. His Tongue Has a Sting

The tongue is compared to a stinger because, just as a sting causes pain, hurtful speech wounds the hearts of people. Intended referent: Speech or tongue. Borrowed image: Sting.

Common attribute: Causing pain and distress

10. The Sun of Life

An important and beneficial person is compared to the sun because, just as the sun provides light and warmth, that person contributes significantly to the lives of others.

Intended referent: An important and beneficial person. Borrowed image: Sun. Common attribute: Providing benefit, guidance, and vitality

11. The Flower of the Gathering (the life of the party)

The most beloved and distinguished individual in an assembly is compared to a flower because, just as a flower brings beauty and delight, that person enhances the charm and liveliness of the gathering.

Intended referent: The most admired person in the gathering. Borrowed image: Flower.

Common attribute: Beauty and popularity

12. He Is a Lion

A courageous individual is compared to a lion because, just as a lion is powerful and fearless, that person is brave and resolute.

Intended referent: A brave person. Borrowed image: Lion. Common attribute: Courage and strength

13. A Snake in the Sleeve (a snake in the grass)

A treacherous person is compared to a snake because, just as a snake inflicts hidden harm, such an individual betrays those closest to him.

Intended referent: A treacherous individual. Borrowed image: Snake. Common attribute: Betrayal and concealed harm

14. The Pillar of the House

A supportive member of the family is compared to a pillar because, just as a pillar supports a building, that person serves as the foundation and support of the household.

Intended referent: A family supporter. Borrowed image: Pillar. Common attribute: Support and stability. (Fotuhi, 1385, p. 71)

Implicit and Imagistic Metaphor (*Isti'ārah Makniyyah wa Takhyīliyyah*)

In everyday Pashto discourse, **implicit metaphors (*isti'ārah makniyyah*)** and **imagistic metaphors (*isti'ārah takhyīliyyah*)** occur with great frequency. In this type of metaphor, the borrowed image (*musta'ār minhu*) is omitted, while the intended referent (*musta'ār lahu*) remains present. The omitted image is inferred through one of its characteristic attributes or associated features. Because the borrowed image is concealed and can only be identified through its attributes, this type is called an **implicit metaphor**. Furthermore, since the identification of the omitted image depends upon imaginative reconstruction, some rhetoricians have also referred to it as an **imagistic metaphor** (Hamkar, 1398, p. 185).

Examples from Everyday Language

1. The Eyes of the Sky Filled with Tears or The Sky Wept

When rain begins to fall, village elders may say: Today the sky wept or the eyes of the sky filled with tears.

The sky neither possesses eyes nor is capable of weeping. These are human characteristics. Here, the sky is implicitly compared to a sorrowful human being. The human referent remains concealed, while only its associated attributes, eyes and weeping, are assigned to the sky.

2. The Sun of Our Fortune Has Set

When an elder dies or a great misfortune befalls a household or village, people may say: The sun of our fortune has set.

Fortune is not a material entity possessing a sun capable of setting. In this metaphor, fortune is imaginatively conceptualized as a sky whose light and happiness have disappeared.

3. The Claws of Time Have Seized Me

When someone becomes overwhelmed by hardship and poverty, he may say: The claws of time have rendered me helpless.

Time possesses neither hands nor claws. Here, time is imagined as a predatory beast capable of capturing its victim with its claws. The animal itself remains unstated, while one of its characteristic features, its claws, is explicitly mentioned.

4. Even the Old Plane Tree of the Village Mourned His Death

When a death occurs and silence descends upon an entire village, people may metaphorically attribute grief even to the trees.

A plane tree is incapable of sorrow, mourning, or weeping in the human sense. In this expression, a human emotional characteristic is imaginatively assigned to the tree.

5. Death Had Lain in Ambush for Him Along the Road

When someone dies unexpectedly in an accident or sudden event, people often remark:

Death was waiting for him on the road.

Death is neither a physical being nor an enemy capable of sitting in ambush. In this metaphor, death is imagined as a hidden hunter or bandit waiting with a weapon in hand.

The hunter remains concealed, while only his characteristic action, lying in ambush, is attributed to death.

Sensory Metaphor (*Isti'ārah Ḥissiyyah*)

A **sensory metaphor** is one in which the borrowed image can be perceived through the senses. For example, when someone says: He is a fox. The intended referent may be a cowardly or cunning individual, while the borrowed image, *fox*, is a sensory and observable entity (Muslim Dost, 1379, p. 143).

Examples of Sensory Metaphors in Everyday Language

1. Our Lion Has Returned from Work

Intended referent: A brave and capable son or young man (implicitly understood)

Borrowed image: Lion (a sensory and observable creature)

Shared attribute: Courage, bravery, and strength

2. The Moon Came to My House Today

Intended referent: A beautiful bride, daughter, or guest

Borrowed image: Moon

Shared attribute: Exceptional beauty, radiance, and delightfulness

3. Pearls Poured from His Mouth Again

Intended referent: Wise, truthful, and valuable words, or beautiful white teeth

Borrowed image: Pearls

Shared attribute: Beauty, value, purity, and attractiveness

4. Do Not Call Out to That Wall; It Is Useless.

Intended referent: An insensitive, hard-hearted, or unintelligent person

Borrowed image: Wall

Shared attribute: Unresponsiveness, inability to hear, and lack of reaction

5. A New Flower Has Been Added to My Garden Today

Intended referent: A newborn child

Borrowed image: Flower

Shared attribute: Delicacy, freshness, beauty, and the joy brought to the family

Intellectual Metaphor (*Isti'ārah 'Aqliyyah*)

An **intellectual metaphor** is one in which the intended referent (*musta'ār lahu*) is apprehended through reason rather than through the senses. For instance, if one compares **Mahmud's moral character** to **pearls**, omits the original subject (moral character), and mentions only the pearls, the resulting expression constitutes an intellectual metaphor. The intended referent, good moral character, is not something perceptible by the senses; rather, it is understood intellectually and conceptually (Muslim Dost, 1379, p. 143).

Examples of Intellectual Metaphors in Everyday Discourse

1. I Saw the Dark Night of Ignorance in My Village.

Intended referent: Ignorance and lack of knowledge (an abstract intellectual condition)

Borrowed image: A dark night (a sensory phenomenon)

Shared attribute: Inability to perceive the correct path, confusion, fear, and a state of being lost

2. I Broke the Teeth of Her Arrogance

Intended referent: Pride, arrogance, and rebelliousness (abstract internal qualities)

Borrowed image: The teeth, or, by implication, the fangs, of a harmful beast. The beast itself remains concealed, while one of its features (teeth) is mentioned, making this simultaneously an intellectual and implicit metaphor.

Shared attribute: Causing harm and serving as an instrument of power and dominance

3. Knowledge Is the Lamp of the Human Heart

Intended referent: Knowledge and understanding (abstract intellectual concepts)

Borrowed image: A lamp or source of light (a sensory object)

Shared attribute: Illuminating truth and dispelling the darkness of ignorance

4. The Sun of My Fortune Has Set

Intended referent: Good fortune and a happy life (abstract concepts)

Borrowed image: The sun, a visible celestial body that sets

Shared attribute: The disappearance of light and hope, followed by the arrival of darkness and despair

5. Awaken from the Sleep of Negligence

Intended referent: Negligence, heedlessness, and ignorance (mental and spiritual conditions)

Borrowed image: Natural sleep (a sensory state)

Shared attribute: Unawareness of surrounding realities and a condition of unconsciousness

Extended or Reinforced Metaphor (*Isti 'ārah Murashshahāh*)

An **Extended/Reinforced Metaphor** (*Murashshahāh*) is a metaphor in which, after the borrowed image (*mushabbah bihi*) has been introduced, additional attributes and accessories associated exclusively with that image are added to the discourse.

The literal meaning of *tarshīh* is “to strengthen” or “to water.” In rhetorical terminology, it refers to strengthening a metaphor through the introduction of characteristics belonging to the borrowed image. As a result, the figurative meaning becomes so dominant that, for a moment, the reader may almost imagine the borrowed image to be literally present. For this reason, classical rhetoricians regard this type as one of the most eloquent and powerful forms of metaphor like the metaphors: Take the truth; it is a profitable bargain. (Muslim Dost, 1379, p. 150).

Examples from Everyday Discourse

1. I Saw the Sword of His Tongue; It Had Been Sharpened on the Whetstone and Never Hesitated to Cut.

Here, **the tongue** is metaphorically represented as a **sword**. The subsequent descriptions, sharpened on a whetstone and cutting without hesitation, are attributes that belong exclusively to a real sword, not to a tongue. Because characteristics of the borrowed image are introduced and reinforced, the metaphor becomes **murashshahāh** (extended/reinforced).

2. I Saw the Lion Attack the Enemy; He Buried His Claws in Their Throats and Tore Them with His Sharp Teeth.

Here, the intended referent is a courageous and powerful soldier or warrior, and the Borrowed image is Lion. The expressions: burying claws, and tearing with sharp teeth, belong to an actual lion rather than to a human soldier.

Consequently, the metaphor is reinforced through the introduction of attributes associated exclusively with the borrowed image.

3. The Lion Emerged from the Hujrah (guestroom) and Displayed His Sharp Claws in the Field.

Original meaning (intended referent): A brave and heroic young man

Borrowed image: Lion

Reinforcing attribute: Displaying sharp claws. Since humans do not possess claws, this characteristic belongs solely to a real lion and therefore reinforces the metaphor.

4. Stay Away from That Wolf Who Makes the Mountains Echo with His Howls During Stormy Nights.

Original meaning (intended referent): A tyrannical or malicious person

Borrowed image: Wolf

Reinforcing attribute: Making the mountains echo with howls. Howling is an action associated with a real wolf, not with a human being.

5. Knowledge and Wisdom Are a Tree Whose Roots Are Firmly Embedded in Hearts, Whose Branches Reach the Sky, and Which Constantly Bears Sweet Fruit.

In this literary expression, the borrowed image, tree, is used to represent the intended referent, Knowledge and wisdom while the attributes, possessing roots and branches, and bearing fruit, belong entirely to a real tree.

Important Distinction: If, instead of characteristics belonging to the borrowed image, the discourse introduced characteristics belonging to the intended referent, the metaphor would be classified as a **Stripped Metaphor** (*Isti'ārah Mujarradah*). Because the examples above strengthen and “water” the borrowed image through its own distinctive attributes, they are classified as **Extended/Reinforced Metaphors** (*Murashshahah*).

Stripped Metaphor (*Isti'ārah Mujarradah*)

A **Stripped Metaphor** (*Mujarradah*) is one in which, after the borrowed image has been mentioned, the discourse introduces characteristics that actually belong to the original intended referent rather than to the borrowed image.

The literal meaning of *tajrīd* is “stripping away” or “removing adornments.” In rhetorical usage, it signifies that the discourse gradually returns from the figurative image toward the original intended meaning.

In other words, it is a metaphor accompanied by expressions appropriate to the intended referent (Muslim Dost, 1379, p. 151).

Examples from Everyday Discourse

1. The Khan's Anger Is an Axe That Wounds People's Hearts in Public Gatherings.

In this village expression:

In this literary expression, the borrowed image, Axe, is used to represent the intended referent, anger. However, the subsequent attribute, wounding people's hearts in gatherings does not belong to a real axe. A real axe cuts wood; it does not emotionally wound people's hearts.

This characteristic belongs to the intended referent (anger), making the metaphor **mujarradah**.

2. Ignorance Is Disbelief (*kufr*).

Intended referent: Ignorance

Borrowed image: Disbelief (*kufr*)

Shared attribute: Misguidance and darkness. Both disbelief and ignorance divert human beings from the right path and keep them in a state of intellectual darkness.

3. The Lion Came Out of the Hujrah (guest) Wearing His Turban and Turning His Prayer Beads.

In this sentence, the **lion** refers to a respected, courageous elder or young man of the village. The expressions: wearing a turban and turning prayer beads, are entirely human characteristics. A real lion neither wears a turban nor uses prayer beads.

4. The Flower of Our House Cried a Great Deal in the Cradle This Morning and Refused to Drink Milk.

Here, **flower** refers to an innocent child of the household. Child is the intended referent, and The flower the borrowed image. The subsequent descriptions, crying in a cradle and refusing milk, are characteristics that belong only to a human infant, not to an actual flower.

5. Do Not Sit with That Wolf, for He Constantly Backbites His Friends and Carries Tales.

In this sentence, a malicious and harmful person is metaphorically described as a **wolf**.

However, the accompanying attributes, backbiting, tale-bearing and slander, are human actions rather than characteristics of a real wolf. A wolf hunts prey; it does not engage in gossip or slander. For this reason, the metaphor is classified as **mujarradah**.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of metaphor in everyday Pashto is not merely a deliberate attempt to embellish speech or enhance its aesthetic appeal. Rather, metaphor functions as an automatic and conceptual process that forms part of the cognitive foundation of Pashtun thought. When speakers of Pashto say: Life is a journey, they map the entire physical structure of a journey, including destination, twists and turns, provisions, and movement, onto the concept of life.

When the cultural examples found in Pashto are compared with the perspective advanced by Kövecses (2005), it becomes evident that everyday Pashto metaphors are deeply connected to rural life and cultural experience. For example, in the case of **Container Metaphors**, concepts such as the **heart**, **chest**, and **mind** are conceptualized as containers capable of holding emotions, secrets, concerns, and conflicts. This pattern reveals the distinctive manner in which Pashtuns categorize emotional and psychological experiences.

Furthermore, a comparison between the classifications of classical rhetoric such as **explicit**, **implicit**, **extended**, and **stripped metaphors** and contemporary theories of cognitive linguistics demonstrates that everyday Pashto discourse possesses a remarkably high degree of imaginative force and rhetorical coherence. In **Extended/Reinforced Metaphors (Murashshahah)**, discourse strengthens the figurative image through characteristics belonging to the borrowed image.

According to Muslim Dost (1379), this produces one of the highest forms of imaginative eloquence. By contrast, in **Stripped Metaphors (Mujarradah)**, such as “The flower of our house cried in the cradle”, the mind is gradually guided back toward reality through the introduction of characteristics belonging to the original referent.

This demonstrates that Pashto speakers, often unconsciously, employ these cognitive and rhetorical tools to strengthen or soften the impact of their speech.

Conclusion

Upon completing this study, I arrived at the conclusion that metaphor in the Pashto language is not confined to written literature and poetry. Rather, it constitutes a dynamic cognitive process that operates continuously within the everyday, oral, and spontaneous speech of Pashtuns.

Everyday Pashto discourse systematically incorporates:

- Orientational Metaphors (e.g., “to elevate knowledge”),
- Ontological Metaphors (e.g., “I flushed my time away.”),
- Structural Metaphors (e.g., “Argument is war”).

The use of **sensory** and **intellectual metaphors** in Pashto demonstrates that ordinary speakers frequently rely on tangible experiences and physical phenomena such as dark nights, sleep, and teeth to simplify and communicate abstract concepts and mental states, including ignorance, arrogance, and heedlessness.

Both the classifications of classical rhetoric, particularly **explicit** and **implicit metaphors** and modern metaphor theory demonstrate that the presence of metaphor in everyday Pashto reflects distinctive cultural patterns of cognition and categorization while greatly facilitating communication and mutual understanding.

In conclusion, the study of metaphor in everyday Pashto not only reveals hidden dimensions of the language's rhetorical richness and conceptual strength, but also opens a new cognitive window through which the classification systems and mental processes of Pashtun thought may be better understood.

Recommendations

1. Universities should pay greater attention to the teaching and application of metaphor not only in written literature but also in oral literature and spoken discourse.
2. I recommend that specialists in Pashto literature compile and organize a comprehensive explanatory dictionary of idioms, figurative expressions, and conventional sayings, and make it available to students of Pashto studies.
3. A comparative study between the everyday metaphors of Pashto and those found in neighboring Persian-Dari discourse would constitute an important step toward a deeper understanding and more effective teaching of the Pashto language.

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