

A Survey on Persian Metaphors in Political Texts from Cognitive Point of View

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Abstract

This study takes as primary the analysis of the use of the metaphorical expression in Persian political texts and categorizes them into various fields including: human being's body member, nature, human being's characteristic, parts of a plant, mathematics, sense, physics, color, direction, war, driving, eatable thing, building, defendant instrument, home appliance, clothes, musical instrument, hunting, animal and economics. Based on the findings, there are twenty fields by applying which the political metaphors are conceptualized in the Persian political discourse. Moreover, the results obtained from the current study revealed that the most applicable field in which the Persian political metaphors have been used, was the human being's body members.

Key words: Pragmatics; Discourse analysis; Political texts; Cognitive linguistics; Metaphor

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INTRODUCTION

Meaning extensions, including metaphors and metonymies, has traditionally been associated with the language of fiction and have long been one of the main concerns of literature and literary works. Cognitive linguistics has given this area a new outlook by spotting

the metaphor as a mean to conceptualize our everyday language and various discourses ranging from spoken to written, from learner language to academic or professional (legal, medical, political). In fact, the subject of metaphor in language has attracted scholars of different sciences such as linguistics, during the succeeding centuries. Actually, Langacker (2000) believes that paying attention to conceptualized metaphor is one of the evolutions that have occurred in cognitive linguistics.

Contrary to traditional outlook which had an influence on most of previous studies, thought of metaphor as just a literary item and nothing more, cognitive linguistic studies during the last three decades have illuminated a new identity for metaphor and that is, metaphor is not just a literary item or just one of the forms of speech, but it is considered to be an active process in cognitive system and conceptualization. Today, it has been proved that metaphor is one of the influential devices in transmitting peoples' experiences, thoughts and concepts, especially for Persian speaker who has a high tendency toward indirect speech.

By considering this point that the amount of use and application of metaphor in Persian political texts and discussions is so much but no comprehensive research or study about metaphor in political texts has been done so far in the Persian language, it is essential to scrutinize the different fields from which the political metaphors are mostly borrowed and conceptualized. So this paper strives to classify these fields. Moreover, we delve the most frequent borrowed field and the reason for that.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive approach is one of the recent schools in linguistics. Dirven and Verspoor (2004) states that cognitive linguists like all linguists, study language as their subject of science and try to elaborate on structure, system and function of language. He also explains that in

order to realize the nature of language, we should look at the conceptual world because language covers a part of the world of concepts. Langacker (1990) mentions that in cognitive approach, language is considered to be the supplementing part of cognition. In other words, language is an inseparable part of cognitive dimensions of human beings and one can just arbitrarily separate language from human beings' other cognitive abilities. Croft and Cruse (2005) refers to this key matter that in cognitive linguistics, researchers investigate the relationship among human being's language, his mind, his social and physical experiences. Bussman (1996) believes that this aspect of language is the patterns of conceptualization in human's mind.

Palmer (2006) claims that by considering the cognitive linguistic point of view about language, one can find out human's identity and mind structure and different concepts which are related to the culture. Evans and Green (2006) cite that in this approach, language has been considered as an illustration of mind, imagination, thought and experience. Lakoff (2010) expresses that cognitive linguistics is an approach in which the linguists believe that language is a device for organizing, processing and transmitting information and represent the language as a part of general conceptual organization. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that in this approach, language is considered as a relationship of human being's conceptions with the outside world.

1.2 Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics

Lakoff and Tuner (1989) say their opinions about conceptualized metaphor and claim that "metaphor" is one of the most significant features in cognitive linguistics. In fact in this approach, metaphor is not a literary device, but it is a part of cognitive mechanism, so as a result, the processes of human thoughts and concepts are basically metaphoric. Evan et al (2006) claims that in cognitive linguistics metaphor can provide a tool for reasoning about one thing in terms of another by means of conceptualization. Deignan (2010) states that metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain and according to cognitive approach, metaphor can be any kind of concepts and utterance of an abstract item. In other words, conceptual metaphor theory proposes that a metaphor is a link between "source domain" which is usually concrete, consisting of entities, attributes, processes and relationships that are directly and physically experienced and "target domain" which is tend to be abstract and takes its structure from the source domain through metaphorical link. Hellsten (2002) mentions that metaphors are used to popularize vague issues as they present novel and abstract ideas in terms of something familiar and concrete. Carrol (2008) relates metaphor to psychological aspects and indicates that understanding the language of metaphorical expression is associated with psychological issues.

1.3 Political Discourse

Chilton (2004) states that according to Aristotle's belief, a human being is a political animal and is able to use language for accomplishing his aims. Therefore, as a simple and short description, one can say that political discourse is using language in a way that human being, as political animals, consider it to be political. Woods (2006) refers to this fact that political discourse involves several roles and dimensions such as discourse for protesting, legitimating, threatening and especially for encouraging. Furthermore, he states that political discourse has been extremely influenced by the expansion and development of mass media in 20th and 21th centuries. He also adds that mass media has created diverse types and forms of metaphors in political discourse that we can nowadays get familiar with political news and totally with political discourse through such media. Beard (2000) emphasizes that paying attention to the political discourse as an occupation is so vital and it aids politicians to realize how language should be applied in order to gain power, exercise power or keep power.

1.4 Metaphor in Political Discourse

Woods (2006) states that meaning which is transmitted through metaphor, is one of the language sections that are mostly applied in politics and Politicians constantly manipulate and reinterpret it, in order to change their opinions in the ways that they want.

Hellsten (2002) claims that in the language of politics, metaphor has been one of the most salient parts of political discourses from the beginning. He investigates the role of metaphor in communicative mechanism between variant sciences and mass media and says that it is so obvious that metaphor is a flexible and dynamic device that has this potentiality to create relationships between different sciences and mass media. According to Chilton and Schäffner (1997) people use metaphors in their political speech to give themselves the opportunities to reinterpret incoming information and judgments about different subjects. They describe that political metaphors are cognitive frames that represent a common way of understanding and evaluating social and political problems. So these metaphorical frames are unique in which they often elicit comparisons between complicated political issues and more familiar experiences.

Chilton (2004) defines metaphors in some political discourses. He investigates about the metaphor of the 'common European house' appeared in political discourse in several European languages in the late 1980s and mentions that how those metaphors passed between linguistics and political cultures. Moreno (2008) explains Aristotle's opinion about Empedocles' unbelievable skill in using metaphors in his lectures. He also analyzes the political discourse limited to "Hugo Ch'avez's speeches" in context of revolution of Bulivaria. In fact in his survey, Moreno investigates applied metaphors in Hugo Ch'aves's

speeches for legitimating the Bolivia revolution and he shows that how Hugo Ch'avez's uses the metaphors in order to confute the political opponents. Base on this study, he finds three target domains (people, revolution, hostile and opponent) in Hugo Ch'avez's speeches. Beside these researchers, Bread (2000) investigates about the Conservative Party's speech ruled Britain and the Labour Party in 1980s. He comes to this conclusion that Conservatives were using metaphors of liquid to describe their position within the Party while the Labour Party used metaphors of solidity.

As mentioned before, metaphor has a wide usage in politics, but despite its vital function, no work has been done about using metaphor in Persian political texts. Therefore, in this research, these political metaphors would be scrutinized first, and then the most common one from which the numerous metaphors are borrowed in Persian language, would be denoted.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study has been carried out with the prime purpose of deeply highlighting the political metaphors produced by political Persian speakers. Moreover, these metaphors would be scrutinized and attributed to different fields from which they have been borrowed. Furthermore, the percentages of these applied metaphors would be given and the most frequent and common one, would be taken into account.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out on Persian newspapers published in Iran. The accumulated data are completely derived randomly from Persian political newspapers from the year 2008 to 2011. Totally, in this paper 160 numbers from 6 types of different newspapers including: Khorasan (30 numbers), Hamshahri (10 numbers), Etemad (15 numbers), Ghods (30 numbers), Mardom Salari (45 numbers) and Jomhori Eslami (30 numbers) have been analyzed and all the metaphors that have been applied in political section of these newspapers have been derived. The process of data collection started in August 2011, took around 5 month and finished in December 2011. First, the metaphorical expressions were found; Afterwards, they were classified according to their navigates and later translated into English. To ensure the reliability of the categorized fields, four persons were asked to examine the classification made for "political metaphors" in Persian texts. At the end, a frequency table is illustrated based on the accumulated data.

4. RESULTS

After classifying political metaphors into various fields,

twenty major fields were found in Persian language. For each field, some examples are put forward along with the English word by word translation of the utterances. In both Persian and English translation, metaphors are indented by red color. Finally, a frequency table is illuminated.

4.1 Human Being's Body Member

- man be hameye javānān tosiye mikonam *dasthāye doshmani* rā bebinid.

Translation:

I advise all youth to see *the hostile hands*.

- khode shomā niz midānid ke *dasto pā zadanhā* na az moze?e eghtedār balke az moze?e za?f ast.

Translation:

You yourselves know that *hitting hand and leg* is not because of power but is because of weakness.

4.2 Direction

- in sāyt neshāndahandeye *shānse bālāye* ou barāye piruzi dar entekhābāte rais jomhuri ast.

Translation:

This website shows *his high chance* for his victory in presidential election.

- hadaf az in eghdām *bālā bordane* kārāyi va asar bakhshiye sāzmāne haj va ziyārat bā tavajoh be afzayeshe safar bude ast.

Translation:

The purpose of this measure is to help the influence of pilgrimage organization considering *the high increase* in travelling.

This is an interesting point that in political metaphors, among the different geographical directions, "up" is used more than other directions.

4.3 Physics

- sa?y konid moshkele ezdevāj va *sanginiye ān* rā hal konid.

Translation:

Try to solve the problem of marriage and *its weight*.

- shāyeste ast ke *sabok budane* jahiziye sharti bārāye vām dādan be javānhā bāshad.

Translation:

That is good to consider *the light* dowry as a condition for giving loan to youth.

4.4 Building

- shāyad in keshvar bekhāhad hamchenān *dar* rā be ruye mozākerāte solh āmiz bāz negah dārad.

Translation:

Maybe this country wants still kept *the door* open for peaceful discussions.

- be nazar khandedār miāyad agar iāshn bekhāhad beyne delhāye beham peyvaste *divār* bekeshad.

Translation:

It will seem funny if he wants to draw *a wall* between the joining hearts.

4.5 Musical Instrument

• omidvārim hameye mardom bar *table vahdat* bekuband.

Translation:

We hope all people pound on *the drum of union*.

• ānān nabāyad mānande *table tu khāli* bāshand va bāyad kāri anjām dahand.

Translation:

They should not like *an empty drum* and should do something.

In political metaphorical expressions, among different musical instruments, drum is used more frequently.

4.6 War

• bitavajohiye mardome in mantaghe be *hojume gardo ghobār* be shahrhāye digar edāme dārd.

Translation:

Ignorance of people in this zone toward *the rush of mist and dust* to other cities is continuing.

• do?ā *separi* āst barāye farde mo?men tā ou rā az balahā va pishāmadhā hezf konad.

Translation:

Pray is like *a shield* for a Methodist that saves him from accidents.

4.7 Mathematics

• be jāye yāftane *rāhe hal, surat mas?ale rā* pāk mikonand.

Translation:

Instead of finding *the solution*, they cross out *the problem*.

• bāyad sa?y konim *afkāre manfi* nadāshte bāshim.

Translation:

We should try not to have *negative thought*.

In this field, the amount of the application of negative phrases is more than positive phrases.

4.8 Human Being's Characteristic

• yek rejime *morde* be sakhti *zende* mishavad.

Translation:

A *dead* regime hardly becomes *alive*.

• kārhā *khābide* ast.

Translation:

The labors are *asleep*.

4.9 Color

• ruze panshanbe, *ruze siyāh* mibāshad.

Translation:

Thursday is the *black day*.

• az *hozure sabze* hameye mardom tashakkor mikonam.

Translation:

I am grateful of the *green presence* of all the people.

Among different colors that human's eye can distinguish, in political metaphors, dark colors like black, grey and respectively, golden, green, red and white are used.

4.10 Clothes

• in mosibat *dāmane* khodeshān rā niz gereft.

Translation:

This disaster got their *skirts*, too.

• ba?zi az afrād *kolāhhāye* bozorgi bar sare mardom gozāshte and.

Translation:

Some people have put big *hats* on other people's head.

In political metaphors, skirts is used more than other clothing.

4.11 Parts of a Plant

• mā be tahghighāt edāme midahim tā *rishehāye* in ?avāmel moshakhs shavad.

Translation:

We continue the investigation to denote the *roots* of these factors.

• ba?zi afrād, bā bayāne chenin sokhanāni, bejāye hale *risheye* masā?el, ehsāsāte mardom rā jarihedār mikonand.

Translation:

Some people, by expressing these ideas, will hurt people's feelings, instead of *root* solving problems.

4.12 Animal

• az ān zamān, daste *rubāhe makkār* baste shod.

Translation:

After that time, the hand of *tricky fox* was closed.

• man be shomā tosiye mikonam ke *gorghāye* gorosne ra bebinid.

Translation:

I advise you to see the hungry *wolves*.

In political metaphor, mostly lion, fox and wolf are used because they are wild animals and this point shows that in political domain, the application of violent words is more.

4.13 Economics

• mellati ke dārāye hoveiyat ast, nesbat be *bahaye khune shahidān*, bitafāvot nist.

Translation:

A nation which has identity do not ignore *the cost of martyrs' blood*.

• in ghānun komak mikonad ke *nerkhe bikāri* kāhesh yābad.

Translation:

This rule has been helped *the price of unemployment* to decrease.

4.14 Sense

• in mozākerāt *talkhihāyi* ham dāsht.

Translation:

These discussions had some *bitterness*, too.

• *shiriniye* entekhābāt dar yādhā mimānad.

Translation:

The *sweetness* of the election remains in memory.

4.15 Driving

- mozākere behtarin **rāhe** khoruj az **bombast** mibāshad.

Translation:

Discussion is the best **way** for getting out of **impasse**.

- teye chand hafteye akhir, az **tunelhāye** entekhābāti gozashtim.

Translation:

During the previous weeks, we passed through **the tunnel of election**.

4.16 Nature

4.16.1 Sky

- molāheze mikonim ke in arghām tā che andāze **nojumiyand**.

Translation:

We can see the extent in which these numbers are **planetary**.

- barkhi barāye yeki do jalase, gheymathāye **nojumi** migirand.

Translation:

Some people get **planetary** prices for one or two sessions.

4.16.2 Mountain

- in keshvar be samte **gholehaye nurāniye** pishraft harkat mikonad.

Translation:

This country moves toward the **glorious summits** of progress.

- rahbar rāhe soud be **gholeye kerāmat** rā e?temād be Khodā midānad.

Translation:

The leader believes that the only way to reach the **summit of munificence** is to trust God.

4.16.3 Fire

- bāyad kāri anjām dād ke dar āyande, **ātashi** dar zire khākestar bāghi namānad.

Translation:

Something must be done so that in future, no **fire** would remain under ash.

- parvardegār **ātashe** ekhtelāfāt rā dar miyāne ommati sho?levar misāzad ke be birāhe beravand.

Translation:

God will expand **the fire** of disagreement among the people who choose the wrong path.

4.16.4 Sea

- in sāyt **moje jadide takhribhā** rā mahkum kard.

Translation:

This website condemned **the new wave of destructions**.

- dolate ?edālat tashkil shod va neshāto omid dar miyāne mardom **moj** zad.

Translation:

The justifiable government was established and **the wave** of happiness and hope among people was apparent.

4.17 Hunting

- cherā ishān **dar dāme ānhā oftāde** va harfhāyeshān rā tekrār mikonad?

Translation:

Why does he **fall in their trap** and repeating their sayings?

- mardom bāyad hoshyār bāshand va **dar dāme** kasāni ke eghteshāsh va sarzanesh mikonand, nayoftand.

Translation:

People must be careful and try not to fall **in the trap** of those who riot and put the blame on them.

4.18 Home Appliance

- ānhā agar madraki erā?e nadahand, nemitāvānand harfhāyeshān rā be **korsi** beneshānand.

Translation:

They cannot put their sayings on **chair**, if they do not give us any evidence.

- ishān bārāye chahār sāl bar **korsiye riyāsāt** tekuye mizanad.

Translation:

He for four years reclines on **the presidency chair**.

4.19 Defendant Instrument

- agar in mantaghe rā zire **chatre defāiye** khod gharār dahand, sākenin ehsāse ghodratmandi mikonand.

Translation:

If they put this area under its **defendant umbrella**, the residents feel powerful.

- Do **tigheye gheychi**, in mantaghe rā tahdid mikonand.

Translation:

The two **blades of scissors** threaten this place.

4.20 Eatable Thing

4.20.1 Food

- ishān be **ghazāhāye masmume ruhi** dar javāme ye mokhtalef eshāre kard.

Translation:

He referred to **poison foods** of soul in different societies.

- motāle?eye ketāb **ghāzāye ruhe ādami** rā ta?min mikonad

Translation:

Reading book provides **food** for human's soul.

4.20.2 Vegetables

- **havij** va chomāghhāye ānhā dar ghebāle in moshkel ghavi nabude ast.

Translation:

Their **carrots** and stick have not been strong toward this problem.

- mā esterātejiye **havije sammi** rā donbal mikonim tā piruz shavim.

Translation:

We follow **the poison carrot** strategy in order to win.

The point that we should take into consideration is that in political metaphors among different kinds of

vegetables, carrot is the only used one.

By analyzing the metaphors derived from political texts, we can offer the following table which shows the percentages of metaphors borrowing from different fields.

Table 1
Metaphor Fields and Their Frequencies in Some Persian Political Texts

Frequency (percentage)	Political Fields of Metaphor
18%	Human being's body member
14%	Nature (sky, fire, sea, mountain)
11%	Human being's characteristic
9%	Parts of a Plant
6%	Mathematics
6%	Sense
5%	Physics
4%	Color
4%	Direction
4%	War
3%	Driving
3%	Eatable thing
3%	Building
2%	Defendant instrument
2%	Home appliance
2%	Clothes
1%	Musical instrument
1%	Hunting
1%	Animal
1%	Economics

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to examine various fields from which the conceptual metaphors have been borrowed in Persian political texts, and also to compare the amount of percentages of the used political metaphors in each field. It reveals that using metaphor in political Persian text is considered to be a very active, basic, common and influential process which is extensively reflected in different newspapers by politicians. In other words, in political Persian texts, metaphor has been actively used and has a wide application. In this investigation, the case of the deep analysis of the political texts provides us with twenty major categories from which the metaphors are borrowed in political texts according to the pragmatics fields. It can be mentioned that the reason for this fact is that totally Persian speakers and particularly politicians and political speakers have a lot of tendency toward indirect speech. Indeed, in political field, the tendency is based on the fact that language should be covered in

layered concepts and should not be conveyed directly. So it leads to give politicians this opportunity to change their aims and ideas according to various situations in a way that they prefer or to hide the truth. Moreover, the collected data show that often the concrete concepts are the source of metaphor applied in the analyzed political texts; in fact, as Lakoff and his colleagues mentions, metaphor is usually used for talking about abstract fields and in most of these political metaphors, the language of mere concrete fields is used for speaking about more abstract fields, and these metaphors often offer a kind of source-target domain patterning. As a result, it seems that a kind of systematic metaphorical relationship exists between these two fields of concrete and abstract in Persian political texts. Besides, the investigation shows that the large amount of political metaphors have been borrowed from the field of human being's body members and this fact displays that among all the various categorized concrete fields that exist in the outside world and scrutinizing in this paper, this field is the most prominent one for making conceptualized metaphor. In other words, most of the source domains are human's body members through which the reader understands the meaning of target domain. The reason for this fact is that human being's body member are the most concrete, tangible fields and also is something which human beings have constant contact every day. So human beings consider their body member as the closest and the most touchable field to him, in comparison to other fields. On other hand, the human being's body member is the first thing which he becomes familiar with and recognizes, so as a result, he can realize it better. Furthermore, regarding human being's body member, it seems that some members are used more comparing to others. Therefore, it is thoroughly recommended that further re-search be carried out in this realm.

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