دراسة دلالية لأداء طلبة الجامعة العراقيين في الكناية

A Semantic Study of Iraqi University Students' Recognition of Metonymy

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الملخص

الكناية هي نوع من اللغة المجازية التي تلعب دورًا مهمًا في التواصل اليومي وكذلك في العمل الأدبي . وهي تساعدنا على التعبير عن أنفسنا دون عناء، تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التحقق من إدراك طلاب السنة الرابعة في مجال الكناية في كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية وكلية الآداب للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٠– ٢٠٢١، وتم استخدام اختبار تشخيصي من أجل التحقق في قدرة الطلاب في إدراك الكناية، وقد تم تطبيق الاختبار على بعض الطلاب الذين تم اختيارهم بشكل عشوائي، كما تم عرض التحليل والمناقشة والاستنتاجات بالاعتماد على الأساليب الإحصائية حيث أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب لديهم مشاكل فيما يتعلق بأدراكهم للكلمات المجازية. وانهم لا يميزون بين الكناية والاستعارة .

Abstract

Metonymy is a type of figurative language that plays an important role in everyday communication as well as in literary work . It helps us to express ourselves effortlessly as it provides a mental access to entities or objects. The main aim of this study is to investigate Iraqi EFL learners' recognition of metonymy . This study hypothesizes that the EFL learners overlap and / or mix between metonymy and metaphor. A diagnostic test is used in order to investigate students' recognition of metonymy . The test is applied to some students chosen randomly. Analysis , discussion and commentary are also presented based on statistical methods. Findings show that students have problems concerning the recognition of metonymy and they do not differentiate between metonymy and metaphor .

Introduction

Language plays an important role in everyday communication and it contains many processes by which we can express conceptual things effortlessly through the mediation between these processes and the things we intend to refer to like , for example , the use of figurative language . Metonymy is a type of figurative language that plays an important role in everyday communication and in literary work as well . The current study aims at assessing and evaluating students' production of metonymy . In order to gain a more probable account of performance of metonymy , this study is based on the hypothesis that EFL learners tend to avoid using metonymies in their use of language which may be ascribed to their tricky nature . It also hypothesizes that there are differences concerning the production of metonymy between males and females on one hand and between students of the two colleges on the other . This study limits its boundaries to present a clear theoretical account of metonymy and conduct a diagnostic test given to forth year students at the Department of English at the College of Education for Humanities and those at the Department of English at the College of Arts as well .

Metonymy in English

Cruse (2000 : 224) defines metonymy as a non-literal process which is used to mediate between what is said and what is actually intended . It provides a full idea even if it is not said depending on background knowledge , social knowledge and cultural knowledge . Geeraerts (2010:214) states that metonymy structures language and language users' thought as well . Language users usually connect what is in their mind with the thing they want to refer to . For example :

- **The pen is mightier than the sword .**

In the example above , the word " pen " is an example of metonymy which refers to the written words .

Littlemore (2015 : 5) defines metonymy as a property of both conceptual and linguistic process . It uses a property or feature to refer to something with which it has an association . It is used widely in language as it plays an important role in our daily communication , it uses main aspect of something in order to refer to the whole thing . Consider the following example:

- **We have a new face in our company .**

In the example above , the word " new face " is used metonymically to refer to a new person .

As far as semasiology and etymology are concerned , Hawks (1972 : 4) states that metonymy in English is imported from the Greek word " metonymia " . This term means that the name of a thing is substituted by another with which it has an association . Nerlich and Clarke (2001b : 245) state that metonymy is investigated for at least two thousand years by a number of rhetoricians . Nevertheless , it has been tackled for more than two hundred years by many historical semanticists and for more than ten years by a number of cognitive linguists .They also state that metonymy helps speakers to say something more quickly in order to shorten or reduce the conceptual distance between what is said and what is intended , i.e., the referents and the referring expression , for example :

- **Baghdad wins the negotiations .**

In this example , the word " Baghdad " is used metonymically to refer to the Iraqi government .

Metonymy is also described as something which uses a word that describes a feature or quality of another thing (Brown and Miller, 2008

: 285) . Metonymy , then , is a process of extension which is based on contiguity between two things where there is an association between them . In other words , metonymy depends on the actual association between two things within one domain . Consider the following famous example :

- **The ham sandwich wants his order .**

This example shows that the costumer is distinguished from others as he has ordered a ham sandwich (Cruse , 2004 : 224) . Metonymy is used to ease communication through rendering the expressions so that the referent is easily attainable through using metonymic expressions . In other words , metonymy is used to account for economy of effort , easy access for a referent and emphasize the associative relation between entities . (Cruse , 2000 : 227) . Thus , metonymy is the case where one entity is used to refer to another entity that is related to it . Consider the following example :

- **He likes to read Shakespeare .**

The word " Shakespeare " in the above example is used metonymically to refer to the writings of Shakespeare (Lakoff and Johanon , 1980 : 35).

Generally speaking , metonymy in English has been studied by two groups : the first group considers metonymy as a rhetorical device whilst the second group considers metonymy as a cognitive phenomenon .

Methodology

The study is classified into a descriptive quantitative research as it describes EFL learners' recognition of metonym . It is in accordance with Bist (2015: 36) who states that a descriptive research is conducted so as to describe the characteristics of the variables of interest . Two statistical methods are used : percentage formula to

estimate students' correct answer percentage , and Z-test to estimate differences between variables .

$$Percentage = \frac{R}{N} * 100$$

Where :

R = the number of correct answer .

N = the total number of participants .

Heaton (1975 : 172) .

The Z formula:

$$Z = \frac{(\overline{x} - \mu 0)}{\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

$\overline{X}$ = means of sample

$\mu 0$ = means of population

σ = standard deviation of population

n = number of observations

Scoring procedure

According to Bachman and palmer (1996 : 199) , right / wrong scoring can be used to score selected and limited production responses . A response gets "0" if it is incorrect and "1" if it is correct .

Analysis and discussion

The test is intended to investigate students' recognition of metonymy and metaphor . It is designed to investigate whether students can identify metonymic expressions and differentiate between them and metaphoric ones . Ten statements are presented : five of them are metaphors and the others are metonymy . Students are required to identify the metonymic expressions and the metaphoric ones . The following tables illustrate the numerical data that is collected to show the difference between males and females at the College of Education for Humanities and the College of Arts :

Table (1) Comparison between males and females at College of Education for Humanities

College of Education for Humanities				
Items	**Males**	**Scale**	**Females**	**Scale**
1	47%	Poor user	41%	Poor user
2	50%	Modest user	41%	Poor user
3	52%	Modest user	58%	Modest user
4	19%	Poor user	8%	Poor user
5	30%	Poor user	52%	Modest user
6	58%	Poor user	66%	Competent user
7	25%	Poor user	61%	Competent user
8	52%	Modest user	41%	Poor user
9	55%	Modest user	72%	Good user
10	33%	Poor user	41%	Poor user

Table (2) Comparison between males and females at College of Arts

College of Arts				
Items	**Males**	**Scale**	**Females**	**Scale**
1	71%	Poor user	64%	Competent user
2	21%	Modest user	42%	Poor user
3	50%	Modest user	78%	Good user
4	28%	Poor user	14%	Poor user
5	21%	Poor user	28%	Poor user
6	64%	Poor user	85%	Very good user
7	85%	Poor user	50%	Modest user
8	50%	Modest user	35%	Poor user
9	42%	Modest user	78%	Good user
10	42%	Poor user	14%	Poor user

The first item is metaphor , it comprises two domains : the source domain and the target domain . The source domain is represented by the snake and the target domain is represented by the human being . These two objects are compared to show similarities between them although they are not identical . Properties of the target domain are transferred to that of the human domain in order to describe that person as deceptive , treacherous and you cannot trust him . This statement does not mean that the person is a snake or a kind of reptile but it is used metaphorically to state that he is tricky deceitful . This comparison is made implicitly without being directly stated . However , if this statement is interpreted literally , it will likely seem odd as it means something that is different from its literal interpretation .

As far as the difference between males and females is concerned , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 47% of males and 41% of females succeed in recognizing this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 71% of males recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered good students while 64% of females recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered competent students .

The second item is metaphor . There are two domains that are classified differently : the human domain and the animal domain . The term   " squirrel " represents the animal domain , and the pronoun   " you " represents the human domain , the target and the source domain , respectively . Two objects are compared and the comparison is made indirectly for the sake of similarities although they are not alike . In this statement , the speaker / writer called his beloved squirrel as he wants to describe her as beautiful , smart and active since these characteristics are associated with the squirrel . This means there is correspondence

between the two . In order to understand this statement , an understanding of the two domains is involved . Students need not only to be aware of the relationship between the source and the target but also of the difference between them . Literally , the interpretation of this statement seems pretty silly as it is impossible for a human to be a squirrel . Figuratively , this statement means that the woman is beautiful , smart and active .

Concerning the difference between males and females , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 50% of males recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose ; therefore , they are considered modest students whereas only 41% of females succeed in recognizing this item correctly and understand it properly ; therefore , they are considered poor students . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 21% of males and 42% of females recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose ; therefore , they are considered poor students .

The third item is metaphor , an implied comparison is met in this statement to show similarity between the source domain and the target domain . Two objects are compared : the first one is the creampuff and the second one is the boxer . The comparison is made for the sake of similarities between them . These two objects are not identical although they share something in common . Literally , the term " creampuff " refers to a small pastry filled with cream , but in this statement it is used metaphorically to say that the boxer is weak and easy to be defeated . Therefore , if this statement is interpreted literally , an error of understanding will occur as it is impossible for a human to be a creampuff . It is not intended to be interpreted literally , but it is intended to make a comparison without directly stating it .

Concerning the difference between males and females , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 52% of males and 58% of females recognize this item correctly and understand its implied comparison ; therefore , they are considered modest students . At the College of Arts , 50% of males succeed in recognizing this item correctly and understand it properly ; therefore , they are considered modest students whereas females are considered good students since 78% of them recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose .

The fourth item is metaphor too , it describes something as it is something else . There are two domains : the source domain which is represented by "creampuff" and the target domain which is represented by the human being . These two domains are not identical , yet they share common characteristics . It is not supposed to be interpreted literally but figuratively since it means that the boxer is weak and easy to be defeated . Therefore , the comparison is made indirectly , the meaning of the term " creampuff " is different from its dictionary meaning .

As far as the difference between males and females is concerned , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 19% of males and 8% of females succeed to recognize this item correctly and understand its implied comparison properly ; therefore , they are considered poor students . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 28% of males and 14% of females recognize this item correctly and understand it properly ; therefore , both males and females are considered poor students .

The fifth item is metonymy . The term " creampuff " in this statement refers to the person who ordered the creampuff . It is not the creampuff that is waiting for the order but it is the person who ordered it . It does not mean that features of the creampuff are transferred to the

person but "creampuff " stands for the person himself . In order to understand this statement , one needs to understand the relationship between the person and the creampuff . Literally , the creampuff refers to a small pastry filled with cream but in this statement it stands for the person who ordered it . The interpretation of this statement depends on the relationship between the target and the source within the same domain , this relationship is met by association and it is reversible . That is , the creampuff refers to the person and the person refers to the creampuff in this situation .

Concerning the difference between males and females , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 30% of males recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose ; therefore , they are considered poor students whereas 52% of females succeed to recognize this item correctly and understand it properly ; therefore , they are considered modest students . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 21% of males and 28% of females recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose ; therefore , both males and females are considered poor students regarding this item .

The sixth item is metaphor . There are two domains : the target domain which is represented by the human being and the source which is represented by the animal , a person and crocodile , respectively . These two things are not the same but they share features in common . Literally , the term " crocodile " refers to a kind of reptile . Figuratively , it is definitely not referring to a real crocodile , but it refers to a person who possesses features of the crocodile as these features are transferred to him ; it means that the person is deceptive and hypocrite . The comparison is made without directly stating it . It is recognized correctly when students understand the relationship between the two objects .

Concerning the difference between males and females , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 58% of males recognize this item correctly and understand its implied comparison ; therefore , they are considered modest students while 66% of females succeed to recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose properly ; therefore , they are considered competent students . At the College of Arts , 64% of males succeed to recognize this item correctly and understand it properly ; therefore , they are considered competent students regarding this item whereas females are considered very good students as 85% of them recognize this item correctly and understand its purpose .

The seventh item is metonymy . The term " crocodile " is used to refer to its skin only . Literally , the term " crocodile " refers to a big predator ; a kind of reptile . However , it is definitely not referring to a real crocodile in this statement , but it refers to the leather of the handbag as it is made of the skin of a crocodile. Therefore , the term " crocodile " is used explicitly to refer to its skin implicitly . In order to understand the figurative meaning of this statement , students need to understand the relationship between the entities .

As far as the difference between males and females is concerned , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 47% of males and 41% of females succeed to recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students regarding this item . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 71% of males recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered good students while 64% of females recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered competent students regarding this item .

The eighth item is metonymically interpreted . Literally , the term " garage " refers to a place where cars are parked or repaired . However, it does not refer to a place in this statement but to people who work in the garage as those people are part of this garage . To interpret this statement properly, students need to understand the relationship between the people and the garage . Therefore , the term " garage " is used instead of people who work in the garage as it is associated with them .

As far as the difference between males and females is concerned , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 52% of males succeed to recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered modest students while 41% of females recognize it properly ; therefore , they are considered poor students . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 50% of males recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered modest students while 35% of females recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students .

The ninth item is metonymy ; it is part-whole metonymy in which part stands for the whole . Literally , the term " head " refers to the upper part of the body which contains the brain . Yet , in this statement it is used metonymically to refer to people . It is used explicitly to refer to people implicitly . Heads and people are related to each other by means of association . They operate within the same domain which is the human domain .

Concerning the difference between males and females , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 33% of males succeed to recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered modest students while 72% of females recognize it properly ; therefore , they are considered good students . At the College of Arts , the data shows

that 42% of males recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students while 78% of females recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered good students .

The final item of this question is interpreted as metonymy . Literally , the term " blood " refers to the liquid which flows through the veins , but in this statement it is used to refer to the gangs who wear red shirts in the United States. In order to understand this statement , students need knowledge about the relationship between these two entities and knowledge about these gangs as metonymy is experientially grounded .

As far as the difference between males and females is concerned , the data at the College of Education for Humanities shows that 33% of males and 41% of females succeed to recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students . At the College of Arts , the data shows that 42% of males recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students while 14% of females recognize this item correctly ; therefore , they are also considered poor students .

Concerning the variance between students at the College of Education for Humanities and the College of Arts , the following table illustrates students' percentages of their correct responses :

Table (3)Comparison between students at College of Education for Humanities and college of Arts

College of Education for Humanities			College of Arts	
Items	Students	Scale	Students	Scale
1	44%	Poor user	67%	Competent user
2	45%	Poor user	32%	Poor user
3	55%	Modest user	64%	Competent user
4	13%	Poor user	21%	Poor user
5	41%	Poor user	25%	Poor user
6	62%	Competent user	75%	Good user
7	43%	Poor user	67%	Competent user
8	47%	Poor user	42%	Poor user
9	63%	Competent user	60%	Competent user
10	37%	Poor user	28%	Poor user

As shown in Tables (7,8,9) above , it is clear that approximately half of the students at the College of Education for Humanities do not recognize the first item as they fail to identify it as metaphor . The percentage shows that 44% of them answer this item correctly and grasp the meaning properly ; therefore , they are evaluated as poor students . On the other hand , 67% of students at the College of Arts succeed to recognize this item and understand its purpose ; therefore , they are evaluated as competent students.

In the second item , the data shows that 45% of students at the College of Education for Humanities answer this item correctly whereas 32% of students at the College of Arts identify this item correctly . These percentages reveal that students at the two colleges are evaluated as poor students regarding this item.

In the third item , the numerical data shows that 55% of students at the College of Education for Humanities identify this item correctly

and understand its purpose ; therefore , they are considered modest students whereas 64% of students succeed to recognize this item correctly and understand its implied meaning properly ; therefore , they are considered modest students .

In the fourth item , the data shows that 13% of students at the College of Education for Humanities answer this item correctly whereas 21% of students at the College of Arts identify this item correctly . These percentages show that students at both colleges are evaluated as poor students .

In the fifth item , the numerical data shows that 41% of students at the College of Education for Humanities answer this item correctly whereas 25% of students at the College of Arts identify this item correctly . These percentages state that students are considered poor students .

In the sixth item , the data reveals that 62% of students at the College of Education for Humanities recognize this item correctly and are considered competent students whereas 75% of students at the College of Arts identify this item correctly and understand its purpose properly ; therefore , they are evaluated as good students as such .

In the seventh item , the data reveals that 43% of students at the College of Education for Humanities recognize this item correctly and are considered as poor students whereas 67% of students at the College of Arts succeed to recognize this item correctly and understand its implied meaning properly and they are evaluated as competent students .

It is clear that approximately half of the students at the College of Education for humanities do not recognize the eighth item as they fail in identifying it as metonymy . The percentages show that 47% of them identify this item correctly and grasp the meaning properly ;

therefore , they are evaluated as poor students . Nevertheless , 42% of students at the College of Arts succeed to recognize this item and understand its purpose ; therefore , they are evaluated as poor students too .

In the ninth item , 63% of students at the College of Education for Humanities and 60% of students at the College of Arts succeed to recognize this item correctly as metonymy and understand its purpose properly . Therefore , students at the two colleges are evaluated as competent students .

As for the final item , it is clear that most of the students at the College of Education for humanities do not recognize this item as they fail to identify it as metonymy . The percentage shows that 37% of them recognize this item correctly and grasp its meaning ; therefore , they are evaluated as poor students . Moreover , 20% of students fail to identify this item correctly ; therefore , they are considered poor students too .

Analysis of questions based on Z test

The estimated Z values are compared to the tabulated value of 1.960 at 0.5 in the Z-test between two independent rations . Significant differences will occur if the calculated value is greater than the tabulated one . However , there will be no significant differences if the calculated value is lower than the tabulated one . Below , the tables illustrate the statistical difference between the variables :

Table (4) Z-test for males and females at College of Education for Humanities

Gender	No.	test
M	36	0.4250
F	36	0.4861
Z_test		0.521
Sig.		Non. Sig.

Table (5) Z-test for males and females at College of Arts

Gender	No.	test
M	14	0.4786
F	14	0.4929
Z_test		0.076
Sig.		Non. Sig.

Table (6)Comparison between students at College of Education for Humanities and College of Arts

College	No.	test
Education	72	0.5625
Arts	28	0.4857
Z_test		0.691
Sig.		Non. Sig.

As shown in Tables (4,5,6) above , it is found that there are no significant differences between students at the both colleges on one hand and there are no significant differences between males and females at the both colleges on the other .

Conclusions

The analysis of the test is intended to investigate students' recognition of metonymy . It validates the hypothesis that students usually mix and / or overlap between metonymy. However , it rejects the hypothesis that there are differences first between students of College of Education for Humanities and students of College of Arts in University of Mosul and second between males and females . It also reveals that more than half of the students fail to answer the test ; this failure is ascribed to a number of reasons . First , they have limited knowledge concerning the notion of metonymy . Second, students are more acquainted with the prototypical meaning than the stereotypical one . Third , students have poor knowledge of the figurative use of words since their meanings are not found in dictionary .

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Appendix

Test items

Identify whether the following statements are described as metonymy or metaphor .

1- He is a snake in the grass .

2- Squirrel , I love you .

3- The boxer is a creampuff .

4- The creampuff is knocked out in the first round of the fight .

5- The creampuff is waiting for his check .

6- He is a crocodile .

7- He has a crocodile handbag .

8- I need to call the garage .

9- There are intelligent heads in this department .

10- The blood has murdered Mr. Smith .