

Critical Analysis of Love Metaphor in Persian Lyrics: a Corpus-Based Approach¹

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Abstract

This article is aimed at investigating different representations of “Love” in Persian Lyrics of Pop songs through identifying, classifying, and analyzing the conceptual metaphors of “Love”. “Love” as an abstract concept has always been an interesting subject in anthropological, sociological, and psychological studies mostly focusing on defining “love” in the best way. Protasi (2008) believes that Love can be considered as Eros which is defined as passionate love for someone. In Moein Encyclopedic Dictionary, “Love” is defined as “loving someone passionately, great attraction, and pleasure”. “Platonic Love” is another term mentioned under the same entry which is considered “loving someone without any physical attraction”. From a linguistic point of view, different ways of conceptualizing “Love” have been studied in the domain of emotions and human relations in recent years. According to Kövecses (2007, p. 2-9) basic emotions category includes love, joy, sadness, anger, and fear in most languages and cultures although there may be some minor differences among them. Conceptual metaphors and their roles in the category of concepts of emotions can be culture specific. Therefore, it is important to find out whether these conceptual metaphors form social models of emotions, or social models are just represented through these metaphors. Kövecses believes that both happen in languages.

1. Theoretical framework

In this research corpus-based critical metaphor analysis has been applied as the theoretical framework. The theory of conceptual metaphor which has received so much attention in recent years is used to identify the metaphors. Cognitive linguistics which is focused on human neural system and how it affects language and cognition has not paid that much attention to the role of socio-cultural factors and how they are related to discourse until recent years. Lee (2016) believes that by critical metaphor analysis, the speaker’s implicit intentions and the hidden power relations can be revealed. On the other hand, critical discourse analysis deals with

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social problems, and aims at discovering the ideologies in the discourse. In this research the corpus-based critical metaphor analysis is based on the methodology introduced by Charteris-Black (2004). Metaphor analysis typically proceeds by collecting linguistic metaphors, generalizing from them to the conceptual metaphors and then using the results to suggest understandings or thought patterns which construct or constrain people's beliefs and actions (Cameron & Low, 1999, p. 80). These stages are a lot similar to three phases introduced in Fairclough (1995, p. 6) including identification, interpretation and explanation. Charteris-Black (2004) introduced three terms: conceptual key is a statement which resolves the semantic tension of a set of conceptual metaphors by showing their relationships; conceptual metaphor is a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of metaphors by showing their relationships, and metaphor which is a linguistic representation resulted from a change in the usage of a word or phrase from an expected context or domain to another unexpected domain or context, a change that creates semantic tension. Those instances that have metaphoric usage according to this framework are searched as keywords in the corpus and analyzed quantitatively. In the second phase which is qualitative, the context of the keywords is checked in the corpus to find out whether the keywords have a metaphoric or literal usage. In the next phase, it is tried to connect metaphors to the cognitive and pragmatic factors related to their usage.

2. Methodology

This research is a corpus-based discourse study, and aims at the critical analysis of love metaphor in the corpus of Persian lyrics in love and social Pop songs according to "Corpus Approach to Critical Metaphor" (Charteris-Black, 2004) in order to find out the significant differences between the metaphoric representations of love in these two genres. So, the method is a descriptive-analytic one. The analysis is based on the conceptual metaphors which were classified as structural, ontological and orientational metaphors. The research hypotheses are as follows: Conceptual metaphors of love in both genres can be classified into structural, ontological and orientational categories. The ways of conceptualization of love in structural, ontological and orientational metaphors show quantitative and qualitative significant differences in love and social lyrics.

3. Results and discussions

The sample consists of 150 lyrics (75 lyrics in each genre) which have been selected using corpus and computational methods from the corpus of contemporary Persian pop Lyrics consisting of 1000 lyrics (177377 words) (Amiri, 1395). 219 metaphors were analyzed. Findings show that ontological (N: 119), structural (N: 98) and orientational (N: 2) had the most and the least frequencies. Two conceptual keys, LOVE IS UNITY, and LOVE IS FORCE were identified. The occurrence of all metaphors of LOVE IS UNITY in love lyrics is higher than social lyrics and in LOVE IS FORCE conceptual key LOVE IS MOTIVE/ HEALER/ TORTURE is higher than in love lyrics. Statistical analysis shows that the difference between two genres in the LOVE IS UNITY conceptual key and LOVE IS BURNING/ CAUSE/ JUERNEY/ PLANT conceptual metaphors is significant ($P < 0.05$).

Keywords: love metaphor, Persian lyrics, critical analysis, corpus analysis