

A Linguistic Study of Jordanian Popular Metonymic Expressions

Omar Hazaymeh*

Abstract: Metonymy is a kind of rhetorical art that people use to express different purposes. It is related to the social context which in turn is related to the linguistic behavior because the relation between the metonymy and the social context shows the communicative role of the metonymy and the function it achieves in the social context. Besides, the temporal and spatial elements play important role in building metonymy. The study aims to investigate metonymic expressions in Jordanian Arabic. It focuses on three sides 'body parts, winter condition, and English borrowed words.' The corpus of the study is collected from various related sources; then it undergoes deep investigation where the findings show that inside and outside body parts are used for metonymic expressions. The study also showed that winter conditions are other sources of metonymic expressions in addition to a number of English loanwords. The outcomes also concluded that these metonymic expressions were used for different social functions in Jordan.

Keywords: Jordan, metonymy, body parts, weather, English loanwords

INTRODUCTION

No language is separated from the cultural structure that connects its native speakers with it. The language represents the honest repertoire that preserves the language's continuity from one generation to another. The figurative expressions, including the metonymy ones, are not separated from other forms of linguistic expressions. Metonymy in general is saying something and meaning another thing. The metonymy is distinguished in that it is one of the rhetorical methods in language, as it is concerned with the meaning and how to express it in a strong and beautiful manner. Of the rhetorical characteristics that distinguish metonymy is its care of the meaning in an exaggerated manner that gives it prominent strength and effect. The popular metonymy is a form of the popular expressions that is used by people

* Omar Hazaymeh (✉)

Al-Balqa Applied University / Al-Huson University College, Salt / Irbid, Jordan
e-mail: omar1972@bau.edu.jo

in their daily life in order to express their opinions towards others and events. Jordanian popular literature includes a big number of metonymic expressions that are characterized by their rhetoric brevity, beauty of meaning, abundance of connotations, and quality of metonymy. The Jordanian popular metonymic expressions are also characterized by their public acceptance, rapid spread and ease of use by people no matter of their different cultural, scientific and social levels or backgrounds because they stem from people's daily life experiences and from many real situations. The Jordanian popular metonyms express the various conditions of the society such as joy, love, hatred, contentment, greediness, sadness, customs, traditions, beliefs, pains and hopes, where people use such metonymic expressions in order to emphasize a particular situation or to clarify their views towards it. Also, many Jordanian popular metonyms are used as euphemisms in order to avoid the using embarrassed expressions, taboos or prohibited things. The Jordanian popular metonyms are many and vary in their purposes, contents, and the tools that are used in their formulation as many of them have been used for different social values and purposes such as description, analogy, advice, avoiding embarrassment, sarcasm, irony, pity, supplication, compliment, consolation, joking, foreplay, warning, and other social purposes and values for which language is utilized.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

As a bottom-up study, the present study focuses its analysis on the popular metonymic expressions in Jordanian Arabic. It will follow the analytical and descriptive approach in investigating the linguistic structure and social functions of these expressions. The corpus of the study is collected from different related sources including local mass media 'TV and radio' programs, printed and online articles, newspapers, and sites. Personal observation was another source of information because the researcher is a native citizen of the targeted society. After collecting the required data, they were thoroughly investigated in order to explore their linguistic components and social purposes. Because the study is limited in its purpose and scale, it will only concentrate on the Jordanian popular metonymic expressions that are used with body parts, winter conditions, and English borrowed words.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Metonymy is important rhetoric tool that is used in order to express views or attitudes towards people, things, or events. Muhammad (2017, 26) mentioned that *kenayah* [كناية] is the Arabic equivalent for metonymy, and that the majority of Arabic lexicons discussed the concept of metonymy as a figure of speech and rhetorical device during the process of explaining its root verb *kana* كنى. Kövecses (2010, 191) pointed out that metonymy in the traditional view is the chiefly use of a word in place of another in order to refer to some entity, where one word can be used for another if the meanings of the words are contiguously related, while in the cognitive linguistic view, metonymy is conceptual in nature where its main function is to provide mental access through one conceptual entity to another as it is based on ICMs with specific conceptual relationships among their elements. Abdel-Ghafar (2018, 398) pointed out that metonymy is one of expressive potentials of the language with its evidentiary power to prove, substantiate and confirm the meaning which gives it an argumentative ability, makes it one of the argumentation techniques successful in achieving the objectives of discourse.

Metonymical expressions show good reflection of the human conceptual system because they are regarded as examples of our conceptualisation processes and organization (Zibin & Hamdan 2019, 240-241). As stated by Kotait (2019, 57) “metonymy is a basic conceptual phenomenon. It is a mode of thinking that is pervasive in our everyday life as well as in our language. When we think metonymically, instead of putting all the knowledge pertaining to a certain concept in a lot of words, we economically choose a salient point of focus in that concept that gives access to the concept as a whole.” Al-Adaileh & Abbadi (2012, 73) investigated the metonymical idioms of body parts in Jordanian Arabic, where they explored the role that body parts have in motivating different aspects of metonymical meaning in Jordanian Arabic. Almawjeh & Al-Khawalda (2021, 1) studied a number of body parts that are used intensively in Jordanian daily speech in order to express certain meanings that are different from their conceptual meanings.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Metonymic Expressions with Body Parts

A number of the inside and outside body parts are used to form metonymic expressions in Jordanian Arabic that are used for different

social functions in as the following examples show. Two inside body parts and two outside ones will be covered in this section with three metonymic expressions for each one because of the limited scale of the study.

The heart is one of the most prominent body parts that are used in positive and negative metonymic expressions in Jordanian Arabic. It is intertwined with the colors 'white, black and green' to show the individual feeling and position of a person and to show his view towards others. The metonymic expression *قلبه أبيض qalbuḥ abyadh / his heart is white* is used to describe the kind-hearted person who wishes well for others and does not have malice, hatred and grudges for them. The white color in the Arabic culture is a symbol of purity, clarity, chastity, cleanliness, optimism and goodness. On the contrary of this expression, the metonymy *قلبه أسود qalbuḥ aswad / his heart is black* is used to describe the bad and evil person because the black heart is a symbol of hatred, malice, grudge and wishing evil and loss for others. Green in Arabic traditions is a symbol of life, freshness, change, optimism, happiness, goodness, youthhood and positive outlook on life. It also expresses the purity of heart, mind, calmness, and contentment and it has no negative connotations. The metonymic expression *قلبه أخضر qalbuḥ akhdhar / his heart is green* is mainly used in Jordanian Arabic for men. It is used to show the man who would quickly fall in love and for the man who shows the willingness to marry another woman.

The tongue is another inside body part which is used for positive and negative metonymic expressions in Jordanian Arabic. The expression *لسانه متبري منه ilsanuḥ mitbarri minnuḥ / his tongue disowns him* is used to show the person who speaks a lot and who is willing to say anything comes across his mind, and doesn't mind if he may embarrass or hurt others with his words. *لسانه طويل ilsanuḥ taweel / his tongue is long* is used for the person attacks others with harmful or bad words, and who doesn't show admiration or respect to others and doesn't feel shy of using prohibited or taboo words. The metonymic expression *لسانه ينقط عسل ilsanuḥ binaqqit a'asal / his tongue drips honey* is used to show the person who says kind and gentle words so that he can persuade others and have positive influence on them.

The head is also used for positive and negative metonymic expressions in Jordanian Arabic for different functions. The metonymic expression *من تحت إجرية وبحط على راسه bitool min tihit ijreah wibihut a'ala rasuḥ / he takes things from underneath his feet*

and puts on his head means that a person is either he exaggerates or lies in what he says. The metonymic expression *راسه ناشف rasuh nashif / his head is dry* is used for the very stubborn person. The metonymic expression *هذا راس hatha ras / this is a head* is used to show the person who has high rank and respect in his family or tribe.

The eye is another body part for positive and negative metonymy in Jordanian Arabic. The metonymic expression *يا عيني ya ea'ni o / my eye* is usually repeated twice in order to express admiration of something good or of someone who looks in good shapes or gets good thing such as promotion, success or new position. To wish protection from the bad eye or envy for someone because he looks in good shape or for achieving good thing, people would say *عين الله عليك e'an Allah a'aleak / let the eye of Allah be on you*. We meet in life people whom we believe that they are the top in morals and dealing with people, because they amaze us with their way of talking with us, and they attract our attention with their appearance and the sweetness of their tongue to the extent that it seems to us that they are extraordinary ones, not humans, so that we welcome them in our lives, and our hearts are reassured by their presence with us, and we feel happy to meet them and hearing their speech, but after we come into close contact and deal with them, we discover their flaws, their insincerity, their lies and deception, which make us disgust with them so they lose our respect for them; such case is expressed with the metonymic expression *سقط من عيني saqat min e'ani / fall out of my eye* is used to express the feeling that a person has against another one when this one acts and behaves in a very bad way or says hurtful and bad words, so that this person will lose the admiration and respect which people have for him because they are disappointed with what he did or said.

Metonymic Expressions with Winter Conditions

No season has a linguistic repertoire in the Jordanian folklore like the winter season. Winter occupies important place in the Jordanian intangible linguistic spoken heritage with the presence of many proverbs, sayings, expressions and songs about rain, snow, cold, the two periods *Arbainit* and *khamsinit alshita* 'the forty and fifty days of winter', its three months, and the daily life in winter. Large number of metonymic expressions related to winter conditions are used in Jordanian spoken Arabic which the following section will review only ten of them because of the limited scale of the present study.

To express the severe strong cold that reaches the depths of the body, Jordanian people use the metonymic expression *بردها بنخر بالعظم baridha binkhar bila'adhim / its cold gnaws the bone* where the possessive pronoun 'its' refers to the severe cold. To show the exaggeration of the intensity and strength of rain, people use the metonymic expression *كب من الرب kab min alrab / it rains heavily from the lord*. The metonymic expression *شمسها مطرودة shamisha matroodih / its sun is fired* means that the appearance of the sun is temporary because the clouds will obscure the sun again, and that it is a sign that the rain will fall within a short and imminence period of time. Usually, this sun is hot and harmful so people prefer not to expose to it. To show that the size of the pieces of snow that falls is big, people resemble it to the ear of the cat by using the metonymic expression *أذان مثل أذان القط athan alqut / the ears of the cat* to say *مثل أذان القط mithil athan alqut / like the ears of the cat*. *قالت خذوا qalat khuthu / it said take* is a metonymic expression for heavy rain, meaning that the sky began to rain heavily, as if it was saying, "take from this rain." *خاف من يوم شتوة khaf min yoam shatwah / be afraid of a winter's day* is a metonymic expression that is used as a warning to those who offend or persist in doing wrong something, where the warning here is that winter hits him so that it would drown him or get him wet. The word *قحمشنا qahmashna / we got dried* is used to show that a person feels very cold to the extent that his skin dried because of the severe cold. *أغطيته ighteatah / foggy* is used to show that the weather is full with fogs which makes it very difficult to walk or see. *شرقيته sharqiyyih / easterly* is a metonymic expression that is used for the very cold and severe wind that originates in the east and blows in a westward direction. *المزراب يشقع almizrab bishqa' / the gutter pours* is used to show the situation when the heavy rain falls strongly from the gutter on earth or in the well.

Metonymic Expressions with English Borrowed Words

The contact between Jordanian Arabic and English language can be traced to the time of British mandate on Jordan which goes back to the period of World War I. Since that time, English language has constantly gained importance in Jordan of being a compulsory academic subject in schools, colleges and universities. Besides, after the independence in 1946, Jordan maintained, and still maintains strong military, political, economic, educational and cultural ties with

the English-speaking countries particularly the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The presence of English language in Jordan is seen in all aspects of life such as education, communications, transportation, publication, and military which by no doubt affects the Jordanian spoken Arabic where Jordanians use a number of these English borrowed words as metonymic expressions. The following are only ten English borrowed words that are used in metonymic expressions in Jordanian spoken Arabic in order to serve the limited scale of the present study. The loanword radio which is pronounced radyo in Jordanian spoken Arabic is used in the metonymic expression *بالع راديو balii' radio / swallow a radio* in order to show the one who is very talkative. The word radar which is pronounced radaar in Jordanian Arabic is used to describe someone who keeps observing and watching others where the word radar is intertwined with eyes in order to have the metonymic expression *عيونه مثل الرادار i'unuh mithl ilradar / his eyes like the radar*. The English loanword sauna which is used in Jordanian Arabic in its original English pronunciation is used in the metonymic expression *الجو ساونا aljau sawna / the weather is sauna* in order to describe the very hot weather in summer. To describe the one or the machine with a very loud and noisy voice or sound, many Jordanians use the English loanword compressor in its Jordanian pronunciation *kombreasih* in the metonymic expression *صوته مثل الكومبريسه soatuh mithl ilkombreasih / his/its voice/sound like the compressor*. The English food product 'biscuits' is used in Jordanian spoken Arabic to show the simplicity and easiness of something or the softness of a person through using the metonymic expression *ناعم زي البسكوت nai'm zai albaskoat / soft like the biscuits*. *Kerosene* is used in Jordanian spoken Arabic in the metonymic expression *خالص كازه khalis kazuh / his kerosene is over* to describe the person who acts and behaves in a nonsense or silly way. Freezer is used in the metonymic expression *الجو فريزر aljau freezer / the weather is freezer* to describe the very cold weather in winter. The word xenon is used in the metonymic expression *وضعك زينون wadha'ak zinon / your situation is xenon* as a descriptive phrase to show the perfect and very excellent situation of a person. Cox is a name of a foreign adhesive which is used in Jordan. This adhesive is used in Jordanian spoken Arabic in the metonymic expression *لزقة كوكس lazqit koaks / Cox adhesive* in order to describe the one who strongly sticks to others. Decor is used as a metonymic expression in Jordanian spoken Arabic to describe the man who has no power or allowance to

say or do something. Jordanians say *حاطينه مجرد ديكور hatinuh mujarrad dikoar / they put him just a décor.*

CONCLUSION

When talking about the relationship between the language and the society, or about the many functions that the language performs in the society, it should be known that these two parties i.e., the language and the society, are closely related to each other. The human being is a social creature by nature that cannot live alone, being in a state of continuous and permanent interaction with his peers, as this interaction is necessary to provide important means for communication, that is the language, which cannot be separated from the human being as it is an intellectual phenomenon linked to him without other living beings. Language is linked to its native society and occupies a fundamental importance in it, as it is the strongest bond between its members and at the same time it is a symbol of their coherence and a guarantee of their common life. Language is not just a link between the members of a one present society, but rather it is an important factor for the links its present generation with its old generation. The links between the language and the society affect the form of linguistic structure and behavior, as language enters in a fundamental and smooth way in both the thought and the behavior of the individuals, and their social relations. One of the prominent manifestations for the close relation between the language and the society is the use of metonymy expressions in order to serve different social functions that individuals need to express their views and show their relation with others, events and things. The present study aimed to explore the linguistic phenomenon of metonymy in Jordanian spoken Arabic through three sides. I hope to shed light at this linguistic manifestation and to be a motive for similar studies.

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