Specificity of the use Metaphor by old kabylians speakers (70 – 90 years old) in their everyday social interactions

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Abstract

Because of the significant role of metaphor in our lives and in our culture , we almost all bring different interests to it ,this is the reason why I tend and take the opportunity to check whether metaphors are much more powerful instruments rather than being an ordinary ornament, i.e., metaphors are not just an empty play with words or even a free play for ideas, but they need to be in harmony with the social and historical setting with the beliefs and personal constructs of the society or micro society of the time.

In this paper, I tend to demonstrate that metaphors not only make the old kabylians thoughts vivid and interesting, but they actually structure their perceptions and understanding. Metaphor is pervasive in their everyday life, i.e., metaphors play a central role in defining the old kabylians everyday realities.

The aim is to show clearly that my category of informants (70 – 90 years old) are not using metaphors just for shaping their views in life in present, but metaphors are setting up expectations for the future, i.e., metaphors are rooted in the beliefs, practices and intentions of language.

1. Introduction

We all speak and write with minds different. We most of the time do not make the same mental connections. We do not see the world exactly the same. We are daily flooded with thousands of ideas and statements demanding assent,

yet which we know or believe to be false, confusing or deceptive.

One way to feel ready, comfortable and relaxed in both speaking and writing is the use of metaphor. For instance, when someone feels unable to reach one's idea or thought, i.e., when someone lacks lexis (a gap in finding one's word vocabulary), he or she resorts consciously or unconsciously to metaphor. In other words, we most of the time come across difficulties in expressing our daily experiences, feelings and emotions (such as deceptions, happiness, sadness, anger and melancholy, etc.), therefore, the only way to get out of this "word deficiency" is resorting to metaphors, so that to fill up or plug that lexical field.

2. Definition

Metaphor is defined as the substitution of one object with another, used to assist expression or understanding. It is an implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common. The metaphor, according to I.A Richards in The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936), consists of two parts: tenor and vehicle.

- The Tenor / Topic
It refers to the subject to which attributes are ascribed.

- The vehicle
It is the subject from which the attributes are borrowed.

Other writers prefer using the general terms ground and figure to denote what Richards identifies as the tenor and vehicle. Thus metaphor expresses the unfamiliar (the tenor) in terms of the familiar (the vehicle).

Consider the following utterances in Kabyle with their equivalent in English:

1. [Λduni:θ ðjəpwæs] ⟶ lit-trans (life is one day) - which corresponds in English to (life is a journey).

2. [Λduniθeki ðəlæv] ⟶ lit-trans (life is a game).

3. [Λwæli:s   ðədwæ] ⟶ lit-trans (his word is a remedy).

Utterances in Kabyle. 'thought - provoking' (metaphor)	Tenor / Topic	Vehicle	Ground
S1	[duni:θ]	[ðjəpwæs]	'Short duration'
S2	[duni:θ]	[θətslæv]	Success and failure
S3	[Λwæli:s]	[ðədwæ]	'Relief' – 'a recovering' – 'a sensation of well being' and 'bringing comfort'.

If we use the same key words as mentioned in the comparison viewpoint, we may draw the following conclusion: subject (topic / tenor) + predicate (the part that describes the tenor) which is called (the vehicle) = the 'common ground', (i.e., the similarities between the T+V) which we may call 'the absent or hidden tension' (Prandi, 1999).

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3. The motivation for metaphor use

In teaching, as well as in studying, metaphor remains a major tool we resort to. Because metaphor is basic to language and thinking, any well educated or non educated person should have some understanding of its processes. However, we 'the speakers' in our everyday social interactions need essentially to be in a constant touch with such a language tool.

The metaphor use does not reflect a minority interest only, but its working is relevant to all the students in all disciplines, that is to say in Literature, Economy, Medicine, etc.

Andrew Goatly (1997) writes in this context:

> *"If, as I believe, metaphor and the mental processes it entails, are basic to language and cognition, then a clearer understanding of its working is relevant, not just to literature students, but to any students"*.
>
> (Goatly, 1997: 1)

Metaphor is always said to be part and parcel of our culture. Men and women, young and old, all extract, wrap and mainly reinforce their thoughts, ideas and writings via the key metaphor. Metaphor espouses our everyday speech the whole day long.

Consider the following utterances in Kabyle:

1. [θəpwʌ θəxæmθ]   (It is as hot as a hell)/

                                               (It's hot as the fingers of hell)
2. [læθətsæwəl θəxæmθ]

This is to show that metaphor is felt to add forcefulness, and evidently the forcefulness has some relation to sharpness of detail and concrete of expression.
We are attracted to metaphor in the first place because ordinary language seams worn and abstract.
Metaphor tends also to accompany the expression of emotions and attitudes. For example, in case we reach a certain degree of happiness, we try to express our feelings through different words that fit them, more or less adequately, or with more accuracy depending on shades of meaning.
Saying 'I'm happy' may appear to us quite different from saying 'I'm glad' or 'I feel jolly', or 'I'm cheerful'. In other words, sometimes we feel like 'a gap'/ 'a lack', or even 'a failure' in finding out appropriate adjectives which first define and specify, then right after qualify any special feeling or desire.
Here are some examples concerning the degree of feeling of happiness:

1. [lʌjətsfərfi:r silfərħ]   which corresponds in English to:
2. [lʌjətsæfəg silfərh]   -'He's flyin up'
                                             -'He feels like a million'
                                             -'He's walking on the air'
3. [ti<u>K</u>li ʌtətʌrdəq silfərħ] lit-trans : (she is going to burst with happiness)
4. [ti<u>K</u>li ʌðidʌgər iʃətidɲi:s] lit-trans : (He is at the point of throwing his clothes)

We are all attracted by the use of metaphor may be for one common reason that it provides us with more vigilance, more defense and more protection. Metaphor becomes then the best mediator between the speakers, so as to reach strength and subjectivity.

Because metaphor is supposed to be one way for exteriorizing our grief, and even a way to escape from the bitter reality, we try or prefer to turn to it to reconstitute things and finally reach our satisfaction, aim the target and plug the gap.

Here are some examples:

1. [θəzzuzu:n Λduni:θ]   lit-trans :   (Life   rocks people) implies → 'Life distracts people'
2. [jΛtʃɔ:r uli:s]   lit-trans : (His/Her heart is full) implies → 'she/he is troubled' – 'having problems all around'.
3. [zu:r uli:m]   lit-trans : (Your heart is thick) implies → 'a careless/mindless person'
4. [ðΛjen jæfəs fuli:w]   lit-trans :   (It's finished he crushed my heart) implies → 'I hate him' – 'no more beautiful feelings'
5. [Λweli:s ʈarʂa:ʂθ] lit-trans : (His / Her word is a bullet) implies □ 'he's a wise man' – 'what he says is worthy' depending on the context.
6. [jə‿Kʃəm uli:w] lit-trans : (He entered / got in my heart) implies □ 'he pleases me' – 'I like him'

        This is to show that we often resort to metaphor for one simple reason, that we do not have any other choice. Metaphors are in fact commonplace in ordinary speech and writing and like any other language, the Kabyle is

stuffed with thousands of metaphors and most of them are
so familiar that we no longer regard them as metaphorical
in nature. Indeed, linguists have realized for some
generations now that metaphors are a commonplace way
of extendin the expressive resourcies of a language.
Consider the following instances in Kabyle concerning
'the notion of time':

1- [idɔ:l   lwəqθ]   lit-trans : (Time is long)
2- [jædæ   lwəqθ]   lit-trans : (Time passed), or
(Time is over)
3- [jufəg   lwəqθ]   lit-trans : (Time flew)
4- [ju<u>K</u>ræɣ   lwəqθ] lit-trans : (Time has stolen us) -
(note that the same expression in French is used: 'le temps
nous accapare').

We notice in these examples that the description of 'time'
recommends and needs the use of some spatial or motion
words. The words used in utterances above like [idɔ:l],
[jædæ] and [jufəg] are words belonging to space, which
are metaphorically used to map an abstract area of
experience which is 'time'.
As a litterary device, metaphor can construct a new word
(Levin, 1979). The practical function of metaphor is to
give concrete illustrations of objects (Brooks and Warren,
1961).

We may draw the following conclusion, that one major
motivation among others behind the use of metaphor is the
filling or the plugging of the infinite lexical gaps. In this
context P. Ricoeur terms metaphors that help bridge those
gaps as 'forced metaphor'. When ideas seem not direct, or
when they are transmitted wrong through certain codes,

concepts and signs, 'forced metaphor' come to emerge on the surface,i.e., they intervene systematically and naturally. We say for instance in Kabyle: [vəri:K̲ wuli:s] lit-trans (his/her heart is black), [qəSsi:ħ uli:s] lit-trans (his/her heart is hard), meaning that the person is spiteful, mischievous, wicked and unforgiving depending on the context.

As a conclusion, we may draw a conjuncture between the following two concepts:

The wickedness and the unforgiveness recognized as two 'conduits metaphor' in association with the black colour, which then becomes a proper sign of wickedness and the unforgiveness.
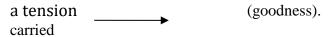
4. Problems raised in metaphor use

The crucial problem is how a metaphor differs from any other literary expression (Rumelhalt, 1979). There is a particular tension between the subject and the modifier in the metaphorical expression, this tension is absent in fact, from the literary expression (Prandi, 1999). This conflict, thus, leads both the reader and the listener to react, then it gives birth to an interpretation (Prandi, 1999).

Consider the following examples:

1- [vəri:K̲ wuli:s] lit. (his/her heart is black) implies

he/she is spiteful, nasty, always with a nasty temper

a tension   ⟶ (vindictive person).
carried

2- [məlu:l   wuli:s] lit. (his/her heart is white) implies

he/she is kind / a forgiving person

a tension   ⟶   (goodness).
carried

These examples reinforce the idea of tension between the subject and the modifier in Kabyle when using metaphor. This is to show clearly that this particular 'tension' is quite absent from the literal expression or let's say from the surface meaning.

Both examples [vəri:K] and [məlu:l] in Kabyl are two contrasted colours, 'White' and 'Black'.

[məlu:l] (the white colour) most of the time symbolizes goodness, purity, whereas, [vəri:K] (the black colour) always reflect a negative aspect, thus, it symbolizes 'vindictiveness' and 'evil'.

The two utterances may be represented as follows:

[vəri:K wuli: s] ◄┐   symbolyses 'Evil'

[məlu:l wuli: s] +◄┘   symbolyses 'Goodness'

Frequently used, metaphors can become dead. Consequently, they lose their figurative strength and imaginative force. They may even lose their potential ability to surprise through repetition (Cruse, 1956). Hence there would be no need to use any strategy to interpret metaphor. There are as many instances of dead metaphors in English as in Kabyle.

Dead metaphors in English:

• 'The head of the department'

- 'The head of the queue'

- 'Le leg of the table'

- 'The shoulder of the mountain

- 'The hands of a watch'

- 'The heart of the matter'

- 'The eye of the hurricane'

Dead metaphors in Kabyle:

- [ʌqərɔː pəðrær] lit-trans : (the head of the mountain) refers to 'the summit'.

- [ʌqərɔː pəxaːm] lit-trans : (the head of the home) refers to 'the chief / the responsible'.

- [θiːɬ nətsəgniːθ] lit-trans : (the eye of the needle).

- [imi lʌjənʂɔr] lit-trans : (the mouth of the spring).

- [ʌqəʒiːr nətævlæ]   lit-trans : (the leg of the table).

5. Theories of Metaphor
5.1Theory of Comparison
It goes back to Aristotle's Rhetoric in which metaphors are best viewed as elliptical versions of similes or comparison with the terms 'like' and 'as' omitted (Hawkes, 1972). This doesn't mean that a simile makes the same kind of apparent assertion or effect as its equivalent metaphor on the one hand, but simply that interpretatively the simile

and metaphor will be equivalent on the other hand (Goatly, 1997).

For example the sentence 'Man is a wolf' means / is the collapsed form of the sentence 'Man is like a wolf', and the utterance, 'you are my sunshine', means 'you are like sunshine to me'.

Consider the following utterances in Kabyle:

Similes	Elliptical similes: without the use of simile markers (like + as) (metaphors)
1- [θgæ Ʌməθsəku:rθ] lit. (she is like a partridge)	[tæsəku:rθ] lit. (she is a partridge) implies - 'beautiful'.
2- [θgæ Ʌməθziri:] lit. (she is like a moon)	[tiziri:] lit. (she is a moon) – (the personal pronoun is hidden / implicit in Kabyle) implies - 'extremely beautiful'.

We may draw then, the following conclusion:

Metaphor = Simile **[-]** minus 'simile markers' (like and as) => a comparison by analogy.

5.2 The Substitution Theory of Metaphor

This theory is most of the time called 'Theory Change'. This theory states that the metaphorical meaning can substitute the literal one (Kleiber, 1999). In other words, every metaphorical statement is equivalent to a literal statement. Advocates of this view claim that the V-term (vehicle) is substituting for a literal term, that the meaning

of the metaphor can be discovered by replacing the literal term, and that metaphor was, therefore, a sort of decorative device (Black, 1979).

Consider the following:

Tenor / topic (subject)	The literal term (the denotative meaning)	V-term – (metaphorical expression) – (figurative)
1-Hakim	[lwa:ræ] 'fearful and aggressive'.	[ðæqʒu:n] (a dog) – [ð] stands for the article.
2- [jəli:s] (his daughter)	[lwa:ræ] 'being remarkable for some bad or evil quality'.	[ðtərjəl] (monster) 'ogresse'.
3- Y	[ihəmməl kæn] 'violent and careless'.	[ðæzgər] (a bull).

5.3 The Interaction Theory of Metaphor

As opposed to the substitution theory of metaphor, which centralises in particular the V-term (metaphor), the interaction theory states that a metaphor is not an isolated term (a word), but a sentence. Black (1979) is considered as one of the most known proponents, of this theory. He regards metaphor as a 'filter' which can organize the way of viewing the subject. The metaphorical expression has in fact two different subjects: the primary subject and the secondary one (Black, 1979). According to Black's

interaction theory, a metaphor works or functions by projecting upon the primary subject a number of implications comprised in the "implicative complex", they are predicable of the secondary subject (Black, 1979: 28). To clarify Black's idea, let us give the following example:

-'This man is a gorilla'

The secondary subject 'gorilla' transforms certain aspects to the primary subject 'this man'; thus, the resulting tension / meaning can be 'this man is 'stout' / 'determined' / 'brave and giant'.

Consider now the following instances in Kabyle:

1- [θæsusmi ðədhəv] lit-trans: (silence is gold) → (le silence est d'or)

2- [Λwæl ɬarʂa:ʂθ] lit-trans: (a word is a bullet)

	The primary subject	The secondary subject / (the subsidiary subject) / (metaphor)	The resulting meaning / (the tension) / "the parallelism drawn between the subject + the subsidiary".
S1	[θæsusmi]	[ðədhəv]	[θæsusmi θəlhæ / ðətsqəl] [ðəlkənz urnətsfuku:] (silence is a / like treasure).
S2	[Λwæl]	[ɬarʂa:ʂθ]	[Λwæl ðædiddi:ʃ]/ [tijiθæ θæmɒqra:nt] (a word is like a serious injury).

Conclusion

Metaphors not only make our thoughts vivid and more interesting but they actually structure our perceptions and understanding, and govern our everyday functioning. We have to be aware of this linguistic phenomenon which is related in fact to linguistic evidence reflected in our everyday social interactions by a wide variety of expressions. Metaphor is not restricted to literary purpose, but it is in all uses of language and structures. Using or resorting to metaphor has proven to be a useful tool. Metaphors help us determine reality of our experiences in life. In this context Lakoff and Turner (1989) asserted that:

"far from being merely a matter of words, metaphor is a matter of thought and all kinds of thought: thought about emotion, about society, about human character, about language, and about the nature of life and death. It is indispensable not only to our imagination but also to our reason."

(Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 227)

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