



Research article

A Comparative and Contrastive Study of Arabic and English Metonymic Expressions

Omar Abdullah Al-Haj Eid ¹, Mohammed Nour Abu-Gub ² & Halla Shureteh ³

¹Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts, UNRWA University

²University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

³Hashemite University, Jordan

Abstract

This study explores Arabic and English metonymy's literary, semantic, lexical, and aesthetic aspects. It investigates metonymy as a figure of speech and compares its types and functions in the two languages. The study confirms that metonymy is culture-bound - that is the meanings of metonymies derive from the socio-cultural values of societies and can't be separated from the contexts in which they occur. The study stresses the significance of considering the relationship between the two entities in addition to the socio-cultural background in the analysis of metonymies. The study also demonstrates how, in English, metonymy overlaps with other figures of speech, above all metaphor and synecdoche. This analytical study contributes to a better understanding of metonymy. It compares the definitions, classifications, functions, and points of similarities and differences in the two languages for all learners of Arabic and English as second or foreign languages.

Keywords: metonymic expressions, trope, literal meaning, nonliteral meaning, culture-bound, society

i. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Linguists have investigated the senses of linguistic exponents from different viewpoints. Metonymic words are important aesthetic features and values of languages and are used generally and figuratively on a large scale in lexical creation. It is an essential tool for human interaction as it reflects culture and conveys emotions and thoughts. Hence, this research is aimed at investigating metonymic expressions as speech figures in the languages of Arabic and English.

The use of metonymy has a rich history, and without it, language is unimaginable. "Metonymy has been studied for at least two thousand years by rhetoricians, for two hundred years by historical semanticists, and about ten years by cognitive linguists" (Nerlich and Clarke 2001, 245). Metonymy is culture-specific and is not haphazardly used. It is deeply rooted in the cultures, values, and norms of communities. Cognitive linguists such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 39) argue that metonymy does not function exclusively at the word level, but it hangs on understanding society's thoughts, culture, attitudes, values, and actions. Metonymy is commonly used to embellish and add flavor to languages by highly emphasizing new meanings and drawing the addressee's attention to a certain vocabulary used to substitute another. Metonymy is mostly used to stress a reference related to somebody or something on an attribute of that

Article History: Received: 06 January 2023. Revised: 30 July 2023. Accepted: 24 August 2023. Published: 26 August 2023.

Copyright: © 2023 by the *author/s*. License Aesthetix Media Services, India. Distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Citation: Eid, Omar Abdullah Al-Haj, Mohammed Nour Abu-Gub & Halla Shureteh. 2023. A Comparative/Contrastive Study of Arabic and English Metonymic Expressions. *Rupkatha Journal* 15:3. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v15n3.14>

person or an idea such as in the typical example by Edward Bulwer, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” The pen and sword are metonymically used as a trope to represent the “written word” and “military force” respectively. Cognitive linguists consider metonymy as a fundamental cognitive process of the human brain. It is extremely figurative and involves the intellectual skills of reasoning, perception, and meditation. “Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain or ICM” (Kovecses & Radden, 1998, 39). Since Arabic and English are highly figurative (abundantly rich in irony, simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy...etc.), this study deals with metonymy. It examines it to show that metonymic expressions shape the way we speak and think. Figures of speech such as metonymy carry out certain functions and may include vividness to a context as they are strongly associated with connotative meaning and expressive language aspects (Shunnaq 1993, 40).

Metonymy refers to a speech figure or a language form where a word is replaced by something extremely close to the original meaning. For example, instead of referring to the President of the USA, the White House is used. Metonymy as a lexical stylistic and semantic term has been defined differently by several scholars. Webster (2018) and OED also refer to metonymy as a figure of speech comprising a proper name or a thing for that of another of which it is a feature or with which it is related. For example, using the White House for the US president. Barcelona (2011, 52-53) refined the definition of metonymy as "an asymmetric mapping of a conceptual domain, the source, onto another domain, the target ... and not linked by a pragmatic function, or, in different functional domains". According to Fromkin *et al.*, (2011), metonymy refers to the use of one word for another word or expression with which it is closely associated, e.g., gridiron to refer to the game of American football. Likewise, Zuck (1996, 67) argues that metonymy refers to a word used out of its usual meaning, sense, or place. It is also employed as a powerful lexical stylistic device for clarity or emphasis.

Doblhofer (1990,155) believes that antonomasia and metonymy are semantically related and are, in some cases, interchangeably used. They are alike and can sometimes replace one another. He defines metonymy as the use of a proper name in a way that it turns into an epithet for a specific object such as ‘hamburger’ (from Hamburg, Germany). Ismael and Adeeb (2013) define metonymy as a figure of speech frequently employed in literature and is a subtype under the term ‘trope’ which is stylistically used with transferable meaning (*e.g.*, metaphor).

Arab lexicographers approached metonymy (al-Kenaya) differently based on the word root (Kanna). The root has numerous senses in Arabic dictionaries. Several Arab lexicographers hold that metonymy refers to a word or expression uttered literally and is used for another word to mean something completely different, and it has a connotative meaning (Ibn Manthour (1970, 711), Sheikun (1992,4), Al-Hashmi (1994, 245). For example, someone has a clean hand. The word clean is used metonymically to mean honest. Rhetorically speaking, Arab rhetoricians proposed various definitions for the term metonymy. It refers to using indirectness where it is correct and using directness where it is appropriate. In other words, the use of correctness of speech to the speech context (Al-Jahiz1 948, 127). Rhetorically speaking, some rhetoricians consider metonymy as opposite to the direct meaning making use of the semantic and pragmatic meaning. It means an utterance referring to an additional sense other than its usual meaning due to some contiguity between the two meanings (Al-Jurjani 1983, 325).

In cognitive linguistics, the meaning of a word is classified into literal and non-literal which parallels the division into metonymy and metaphor. Linguists suggest that both metaphor and metonymy are fundamental tropes and are broadly used in literary texts.

The two tropes are similar but different from other linguists and rhetoricians. Metonymy is usually realized as the employment of a real not imaginary word for another one. Metaphor, on the other hand, refers to the employment of an unreal word in a transferred meaning. Metaphor can only be used figuratively in a hypothetical way and is principally contingent on resemblance, but metonymy can be used both literally

and nonliterally and relies on contiguity. “Metaphor construction requires a concrete idea being mapped to an abstract idea”, (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Lakoff & Turner (1989, 108) pointed out the differences between metonymy and metaphor as follows: (1) In metaphor, there are two conceptual areas included, one being grasped in terms of the other, whereas metonymy only encompasses one conceptual domain, *i.e.*, the mapping happens within only one area and not across areas. (2) In metaphor, the source area is mapped onto the target domain, so it is mostly employed for understanding, *e.g.*, I have control over him (CONTROL IS UP).

The concept of synecdoche is bewilderingly equivalent to metonymy. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 36) characterize synecdoche as a subtype of metonymy. It is typically used in language and is depicted as a trope. According to Webster (2020), synecdoche refers to “a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (such as fifty meaning fifty ships), the whole for a part (such as the society for high society), the species for the genus (such as cutthroat for assassin), the genus for the species (such as a creature for a man), or the name of the material for the thing made (such as boards for the stage). Unlike Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 36), Burkhart and Nerlich (2010, 311) proposed fundamental differences between synecdoche and metonymy as follows:

Metonymy relies on qualitative relations, while synecdoche relies on quantitative relations *i.e.*, on set inclusion. Metonymy relies on the knowledge of the world in terms of time and space, cause, and effect, whole and part, while synecdoche relies on taxonomic or categorical knowledge. Metonymy employs our knowledge of how the world is [in original], whereas synecdoche relies on how it is ordered [emphasis in original] in our mind (qt in Muhammad, 2017).

The motivation arose out of the researchers' observations that many metonymic expressions are used in both English and Arabic as well as the dearth of studies in this field of study to document this language phenomenon. Besides, lots of English language learners are unfamiliar with several metonymic expressions in both languages. This phenomenon has turned out to be a new hot spot of investigation. This paper draws its importance from the fact that it contributes to the research of metonymy in general and the better understanding of comparative studies between English and Arabic. It also contributes to the comparative literature on Arabic and English metonymy. It aims at broadening one's linguistic expressions since metonymy is prevalently used in daily communication. It is an important endeavor in increasing scholars' knowledge of metonymic expressions in terms of their semantic, lexical, and aesthetic aspects. It examines metonymy as a speech figure and compares its types and usages in the two languages, which in turn promotes scholars' lexical repertoire in English and Arabic. Moreover, it differs from other studies as no studies were conducted on metonymic expressions in English and Arabic: a comparative study and thus it attempts to fill this gap in the literature. Ultimately, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of metonymies in Arabic and English?
2. What are the points of similarity and contrast between Arabic and English metonymies?

The following sections will deal with the related studies conducted on metonymic expressions, methods of the study, types of metonymy, purpose of metonymy in English then metonymy in Arabic in terms of its types, purposes, other subtypes of metonymy in Arabic as well as points of similarity and contrast.

Metonymy can be found in all languages from the early literary traditions until today, yet theoretically, as Sebastian Matzner (2016) maintains, “it may well be called ‘the forgotten trope’,” because compared with the attention given to metaphor or other types of figurative language, “it has hitherto received so little attention in literary stylistics and rhetorical tropology”. Ismael and Adeeb (2013) examined points of similarity and contrast of metonymy in Arabic and English. Their study investigated the reasons for using it in both languages. They conclude that metonymy in Arabic and English derives heavily from religion, literature, and culture. However, metonymy in Arabic makes use of collocations and is used as a figure of speech. Correspondingly, Mahdi (2009) explains that metonymy shares the same rules in both languages and the replacement can never occur without the existence of a connotation between two entities or

meanings undergoing metonymizing. The study also shows that understanding metonymy relies on the familiarity of the context, and association and that culture plays a major role in comprehending metonymies.

In another study, Muhammad (2017) investigates the aesthetic and rhetorical role employed by metonymy in the Holy Quran. He stresses the typical features of metonymy and discusses how several strategies are employed in translations to meet linguistic difficulties when rendering metonymic expressions from the source language into the target language. The study concentrates on communicating metonymic words to English and how they are rendered linguistically in translation. The researcher concludes that the Holy Quran utilizes metonymy to express precise messages and address specific issues. Al-Hajjaj (2004) studied metonymy in Arabic and the possibility/impossibility of translating metonymic into English. The researcher explains the concept of metonymy and discusses rhetorical and non-rhetorical issues employed in translating metonymy into Arabic. He presents several verses from the Holy Quran in addition to prophetic as well as poetic scripts that contain metonymic examples. The study shows that indirect rhetorical characteristics of metonymic expressions are powerful. Denroche (2012) examined metonymy in communication and translation. He considers the theory of metonymy as a unifying code behind processing in language. The research analyzes a variety of data to reveal metonymy at work. The analysis shows that metonymy is used literally and nonliterally in language. The researcher stresses the central role which metonymy plays in making language more flexible and reframing debatable topics in different parts of the language practice. Because of its great semantic and aesthetic value in rhetorical texts, metonymy still needs more consideration by linguists and rhetoricians. Without a doubt, some studies on metonymy have explored it in terms of its translatability and communication, as figures of speech. Hopefully, this paper is different from other studies as it presents a contribution to qualitative studies in comparative linguistics and literature. It addresses metonymy from a linguistic and aesthetic perspective depicting illustrative examples drawn from literary texts in both languages supplemented where applicable by examples taken from Quranic verses due to their exceptional richness in imagery.

2. Methods

To meet the objectives of this study, an analytical method has been adopted due to its appropriateness, sufficiency, and comprehensiveness for this type of research. According to this method, linguists need to pay much attention to words or expressions in contexts and examine them analytically to detect the metonymic expressions and their associated meanings. Thus, the researchers investigated (150) Arabic and English metonymic expressions. The source of selected data were samples of metonymic expressions extracted mainly from the Holy Quran in addition to some literary examples from both languages. The study data were collected, classified, and grouped under subtopics in both languages in addition to expressing the meaning of metonymy used in expressions in both languages. Finally, the expressions in both English and Arabic were interpreted, compared, and contrasted to check points of similarity and difference.

3. Types of Metonymy

Linguists have proposed several types of metonymies as follows:

3.1 Referential Metonymy

It refers to a metonymy that relates one entity to another one. It depends on reference-based relations, for instance, the relationship between cause and effect or container and content. It tends to depend on implied expressions. Consider the following example in Anne Bradstreet's poem "The Prologue"

To sing of Wars, of Captains, and Kings,
Of Cities founded, Common-wealths begun,

For my mean Pen are too superior things.

In these lines, Bradstreet refers ironically to her writing skill as a “mean pen” *i.e.*, poor, and unexceptional when compared to that of male poets in the Puritan society. The pen in the example is used metonymically to refer to writing and authorship. The description “mean” shows the type of metonymy that goes against reality and logic as it necessitates that the inferred referent is a human being not a pen like the example “seat 14 is grumbling” meaning passenger in seat No. 14 is grumbling.

3.2 Propositional Metonymy

This metonymy relates two propositions and depends on the accuracy of antecedent-consequent relations. Unlike referential metonymy, proposition metonymy is correct and does not go against truthfulness and logic. It relies on overt expression. The following is an illustrative example:

A: How did you get to the airport?

B: I waved down a taxi. [A taxi took me there] (Gibbs 1994, 327)

The sentence “I waved down a taxi” gives rise to the proposition “I went by taxi.” The interpretation of this metonymy is enclosed in brackets (Warren 2006, 302).

3.3 Serial Metonymy

Díaz-Vera (2015) refers to serial metonymy as metonymic chains presenting themselves using synchronic lexicalized chains or diachronic chains where relations in the series could be missing which means they are no longer available to the members of the speech community (qtd in Muhammad, 2017). Consider the following example:

‘You’ll find better ideas than that in the library’ (Reddy 1979, 309)

In this example, Reddy explains, there is a chain between the words “ideas” and “library”: the ideas are spelled out in words, words are printed on pages, and pages are included in books and books are available in a library.

3.4 Conceptual Metonymy

Skrebnev (1994, 57) and argues that conceptual metonymy includes subcategories as it refers to the broader concept (the whole) by indicating the subcategory (the part). He refers to it as one conceptual entity offering access to another conceptual entity. He further classifies metonymy into four types as follows:

- A. The use of a proper name of a real historic person (which may be universal or belonging to a particular culture): *e.g.*, he is a Napoleon of peace or a Bismarck.
- B. The use of religious figures and names; examples are found in the Biblical names of Ismael- the exile, and Judas –the traitor, and in Job, (a prophet in Islam) which is metonymic for patience.
- C. The use of mythological names, *e.g.*, He was a new Apollo for her. Or when one describes an arduous and frustrating task as a toil of Sisyphus because it is repetitive, toilsome, and fruitless.
- D. The use of proper names taken from literature: as when Don Juan is a metonymy for a seducer of women.

3.5 Product for Producer

He bought a Ford. (Literally, Ford is the producer, not the product while metonymically the speaker. means the car).

3.6 Object used for user:

A good example can be seen in Walt Whitman’s poem “Beat! Beat! Drums.” Whitman arouses a pro-war sentiment by saying “Beat! beat! drums! —blow! bugles! blow!” The drums and bugles are metonymic for

the army; in the past, these objects were used by soldiers to signal war. Here, Whitman says war is inevitable, and the army is marching toward the South. He refers to the sounds of the northern troops marching to the Civil War against the Confederate troops as the blowing bugles and the beating drums.

Another example can be found in Riddle 9 from Anglo-Saxon Poetry: "I'm by nature solitary, scarred by iron and wounded by the sword, weary of battle." Here, the objects iron and sword are metonymies for Anglo-Saxon warriors who used these weapons to battle their well-shielded enemies.

Another example is when a typical attire signifies men or women as in: "doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat" (from Shakespeare.)

Doublet according to Collins dictionary refers to "a close-fitting outer garment, with or without sleeves and sometimes having a short skirt." Doublet is metonymic for men as it is worn by men in the Renaissance, whereas the petticoat is an old-fashioned and thin piece of clothing worn by women under a skirt or dress; therefore it is metonymic for women.

3.7 Controller for controlled as in the example:

Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine.

Putin himself may not have invaded Ukraine, but via the "controller for the controlled" metonymy, one not only says Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine but also thinks of him as actually doing the invasion and holds him responsible for it. This is possible because of the nature of the metonymic relationship in the controller for controlled metonymy, (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:38-39).

3.8 Institution for people in charge

You'll never get **the university** to agree to that.

3.9 The place for the institution

"White House says Biden's Saudi trip wasn't waste" (Kevin Liptak, CNN. Wed October 5, 2022).

The "White House" metonymically refers to the President of the United States of America.

3.10 The place for the event

A good example is found in Herman Melville's nineteenth-century story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" subtitled:

"A Story of Wall Street." In the story, Wall Street is a metonymy for capitalism. The protagonist lives and works at a law firm on Wall Street as a scrivener. He works like a machine. He alienates himself from society and is, eventually, driven to madness. Wall Street is metonymic for capitalist governments which confine and alienate the working class.

In addition, Yule (2003,122) also mentioned other three types of metonymy:

3.11 A whole-part association

A good example is found in the nineteenth-century linguistic expression "field hands" which is a metonymic for the African slaves who worked on fields owned by White Americans. Also, the expression "heads of homes" is very illustrative of this type:

"Then the son of Weohstan, stalwart in war, Bade send command to the heads of homes. To bring from afar the wood for the burning."

In this example from the epic of Beowulf, "heads of homes" refers to the countrymen or Geatish tribesmen who are commanded to prepare for their late leader's funeral.

3.12 A representative –symbol metonymy

For instance, in the Declaration of Independence," Jefferson wrote:

“The United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown” (Jefferson).

The expression "British Crown" is metonymic for the reigning monarch who, during the time of the American Revolution and Independence in 1776, was King George III.

3.13 Container content such as river-water relation as in the following example found in Ann Bradstreet’s poem “To My Dear and Loving Husband”:

“My love is such that rivers cannot quench” The word “river” is metonymic for fresh potable water contained in rivers.

4. Purposes of Metonymy

As illustrated by the preceding examples; metonymy is used creatively and impressively to fulfill several determined functions.

- i. **Economy:** It is a lexical stylistic device used to convey the economic use of expressions. As pointed out by Ziegeler (2007, 101), the economy of expression is a semantic feature of metonymy. It enhances the target domain by involving contextual data. Moreover, it decreases the cognitive processes and makes the reference highly structured and concise. For example, one might say: I admire Spencer and Marvell. In place of saying: I am interested in the literary works of Edmund Spencer and Andrew Marvell.
- ii. **Attentiveness:** it may be used to attract attention to a referent by concentrating mostly on a definite feature of the referent as in the following example.
“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.” This example is taken from *Julius Caesar* by Shakespeare. Marc Antony addresses his countrymen saying, “Lend me your ears.” The word “Ears” in this example is a part that stands for the whole that is the audience’s attention.
- iii. **Expressing personal feelings such as insults.** It is used when there is a gap between the original or literal meaning and the intended meaning. A good example is when the “Uncle Tom” and “Mammy” figures are used in fiction as derogatory names metonymic for very submissive blacks working in the service of white people while being aware of their low social and racial status.
- iv. **Nicknames:** The use of proper names. Kaplan (1989, 559) argues that the addresser may use a proper name to refer to a given entity. He calls it subjective dubbing as in the following example: “All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.” (From James Joyce’s *Araby*) "Jack" here is a metonymic for any average person who practices a trade such as carpentry or blacksmithing. “Uncle Sam wants you to join the army” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary,2020). Here “Uncle Sam” is purportedly metonymic for the U.S. government in the same way John Bull has become metonymic for the United Kingdom or England in particular.

5. Metonymy in Arabic

5.1. Types of Metonymy

The overwhelming majority of Arab linguists and rhetoricians assert that metonymy can be categorized into three main categories:

A. Metonymy of a Described Entity

In this type, one states the attribute and the description without revealing the depicted entity and the metonymic word or phrase requires a context through which it can be recognized as in the following Quranic verse:

"وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ الْأَوْجِ وَدُسُرٍ"

“And We carried him upon a thing of planks and nails (Al-Qamar: 13).

In this verse, God says

And We bore him, that is, Noah, on one, a ship, [made] of planks and nails (user is what boards are fastened down with *i.e.*, nails and the like. The planks and nails metonymically refer to a ship. According to Tafsir Al-Jalalyn the Arabic word “dusur” is what boards or planks are fastened down with, *i.e.*, nails and the like. The relationship between the thing described and the planks and nails is unrevealed but can be connected to the holder of this feature which is the ship by referring to one of the fundamental ideas that can repeatedly co-occur with it.

B. Metonymy of an Attribute

The metonymy of an attribute occurs when one presents an attribute of the depicted entity to express a specific profound meaning or to emphasize a related sense recognized by that attribute.

هَا أَنْتُمْ أَوْلَاءُ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ

"O ye are those who love them though they love you not, and ye believe in all the Scripture. When they fall in with you they say: We believe; but when they go apart they bite their fingertips at you, for rage” (Al-Imran: 119).

The metonymic expression gnaw or “bite their fingertips” is used to convey the resentment and envy of the non-believers. In another Quranic verse, the expression “gnawed his hands” expresses extreme remorse:

وَيَوْمَ يَعْضُ الضَّالِمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا

"On the day when the wrongdoer gnawed his hands, he will say: Ah, would that I had chosen a way together with the messenger (of Allah)!(“ Al -Furqan: 27) .

The metonymy of an attribute can be further subcategorized into two main types.

C. Near metonymy

This type of metonymy does not need much interpretation or thoughtfulness because the addressee moves from the ordinary meaning to the intended meaning without media or relation between the two as in the following Quranic verse:

”وَأُحْصِيَتْ بُنْمَرُهُ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا“

“And ruin closed in on his produce, and he began to wring his hands for what he had spent on it, as it lay fallen on its trellises. He was saying, ‘I wish I had not ascribed any partner to my Lord’” (Al-Kahf:42).

The expression “wring his hands” is employed in the Quranic verse to refer to feelings of sorrow and regret. The synonymous meaning in this type of metonymy is attainable and its intended meaning does not require deep thinking or insightfulness.

D. Remote Metonymy

Remote metonymy requires deep understanding and deliberation because there is media or a relation between the ordinary meaning and the intended meaning. Consider the following example:

The expression "dropped his weapon" is used as a metonymy to mean surrendering or admitting defeat.

E. Metonymy of Attribution

In this type of metonymy, the quality and the depicted entity are explicitly declared, but the attribution is completely concealed as shown in the following example:

Consider the following saying by Prophet Mohammed (BEUH).

"الخيال معقود بنواصيها الخير إلى يوم القيامة"

According to this saying, goodness is attached to and entrusted to the (literally: foreheads of) horses used in fighting against the enemies of religion to suppress the evil of the non-believers.

In the example, the Prophet attributes the horses' foreheads to goodness.

Other Subcategories of Arabic Metonymy

Rhetoricians working on metonymy such as Al-Sakaki (1987:89) classified it in relevance to media or relations into four subtypes:

1. Symbolism: It refers to a subtype of metonymy that has no media or relation between the word and the intended meaning. It includes a kind of concealment as in the metonymy of dullness. For example, he is a man of broad pillow. Culturally speaking, Arabs depict a broad-necked person as a fool. So, the clue, which is a broad neck, is hidden. The broad neck often requires a broad pillow. Instead of mentioning a broad neck explicitly-a symbol of foolishness- he used "broad pillow."

2. Allusion: It refers to the subcategory of metonymy which has more than one relation or vehicle (media) but without revelation. The user of this subtype alludes to the clue of the attributes of the metonymic entity as in the following poetic verse.

ما بك في من عيب فإني جبان الكلب .

I am shameless and glaring, verily a cowardly dog

Paradoxically, the poet describes himself as "a cowardly dog", which, in the ancient tribal Arabic culture, is a sign of hospitality. The dog is described as cowardly as it quits barking due to the abundance of guests who came to get their share of the generosity of the munificent host.

3. Insinuation: metonymy can provide another meaning that can be understood from the context as in saying "a Muslim is a person who does not cause harm to people by his tongue and hand." *i.e.*, a Muslim should never abuse others neither verbally nor physically.

4. Gesticulation: This metonymy occurs when there is a lack of clues in the metonymic expression. In other words, there isn't any insinuation, only a gesture. The following is an illustrative example of a gesture.

"Suad is a woman..." then the speaker gestured using their hand to mean Saud is short. There are no clues or insinuations here only a hand gesture.

5.2 Purposes of Metonymy

Metonymy is frequently employed to fulfill certain lexical and stylistic functions (Al-Mubarid 1956: 674-675, Rubba 2006:1) as follows:

i. Economy and Brevity of Expression

It is an aesthetic feature of metonymy which refers to the economic use of words. Instead of using one, or more than one sentence, a word or an expression is employed to convey the required meaning. Consider the following example:

وقد نظرتُ إليه والسيوف دُمُ

قد زرتَه وسيوف الهند مغمدة

Al-Mutannabi says he used to always accompany Sayf al-Dawla, the Hamdanid ruler of Aleppo (945–67). The expression “when swords are sheathed” is metonymic for peacetime and the ruler’s cessation of war with other nations, while the expression “when swords are bloody” is metonymic for times of fierce battles. The Abbasid poet says literally when swords are covered with blood i.e., much killing and bloodshed during the fierce battles of Sayf al-Dawla with the enemies.

ii. Greatness and Majesty

Metonymy is used to highlight greatness and majesty as in the following example.

We King Abdullah II dissolve Parliament. The use of the plural pronoun "We" highly underlines the royalty and power of the King.

iii. Euphemism.

Metonymy is used, on occasion, to avoid the use of inappropriate or blunt words as in the following Quranic verse:

"بَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا ۗ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا ۙ"

“O ye who believe! Draw not near unto prayer when ye are drunken, till ye know that which ye utter, nor when ye are polluted, save when journeying upon the road, till ye have bathed. And if ye be ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the closet, or ye have touched women, and ye find not water, then go to high clean soil and rub your faces and your hands (therewith). Lo! Allah is Benign, Forgiving” (An-Nisa': 43).

In the Quranic verse, metonymy exists in the expression "ye have touched women" which is euphemistically used to mean sexual intercourse with one’s wife.

iv. Reverence and veneration

Using a nickname or epithet in the form of metonymy can be an act of politeness and courtesy toward others. In Arabic culture, a person is referred to by his/her eldest son's name to show respect. For example, someone is called Mohammed and his eldest son's name is Ahmad. Therefore, he will be referred to as "Abu Ahmad" for the sake of respect.

v. Praising and honoring

Metonymy can play a key role in flattering and commending people. For instance, Al-Mutannabi says praising himself:

أَنَا ابْنُ السَّرُوحِ أَنَا ابْنُ الرَّعَانِ. أَنَا ابْنُ الْقَوَافِي أَنَا ابْنُ الْفَيَافِي. أَنَا ابْنُ الصَّرَابِ أَنَا ابْنُ الطَّعَانِ

Verily, I am the son of saddles (a knight) and lofty mountains; of deserts and plains (as I walked across many); I am the son of poet ship and of the glory of wars and swordsmanship.

vi. Eloquence and breadth of language

The use of metonymy provides language users with a wide range of vocabulary to decide on the proper vocabulary item in a certain context and helps scholars convey their notions and appropriate meanings and avoid wordiness or verbosity. Moreover, it stirs up the addressee's wittiness as in the Quranic verse which evokes our wittiness when hearing or reading it due to the power of word choice. Consider the following verse from the Holy Quran:

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ۗ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

“And if ye, do it not and ye can never, do it--then guard yourselves against the fire prepared for disbelievers, whose fuel is of men and stones”) Al-Baqarah: 24).

vii. **Exaggeration.** The following Quranic verse is an illustrative example:

"وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا."

“And lo! whenever I call unto them that Thou mayest pardon them they thrust their fingers in their ears and cover themselves with their garments and persist (in their refusal) and magnify themselves in pride” (Noah:7).

Metonymy is in the word "fingers." It expresses the exaggerated reaction of the disbelievers when called into faith. The whole “fingers” is used for the part “fingertips.”

6. Metonymy" in Arabic and English: Comparison

This section examines the analysis of metonymy by drawing points of similarity and contrast of metonymy between Arabic and English in terms of the definitions, types as well as purposes and this answers the second question.

6.1 Points of Similarity

Metonymy in Arabic and English is widely used and often shares the same similar features in both languages. It reveals the accessible associations between two entities and is accordingly based on their contiguity. In both languages, it is considered a semantic, lexical, and stylistic device figuratively used to provide some beautiful and artistic features to the style. It is culture-specific and is full of cultural implicature in both languages and it requires a deep understanding of cultural knowledge. It is based on socio-cultural, popular, religious, and literary values and attitudes in both languages. Metonymy in Arabic and English makes use of nicknames or epithets to replace a person's name by calling attention to some of his/her qualities. For example, a speaker can welcome a friend with an epithet or nickname which shows some of his/ her attributes. Semantically speaking, metonymy in both languages wholly hangs on meaning and is subject to the semantic features of a certain vocabulary item to distinguish the metonymical expression. In both languages, it holds just one conceptual domain and is principally used for reference: one entity is referred to through another one.

Although the concept of metonymy has been defined differently by scholars, it is comparatively the same in both languages- a word substitution in place of another based on contiguity. There are also two meanings literal and nonliteral and there is a medium or association between the two entities in both languages. Moreover, the literal meaning and metonymic meaning may be accessible in every occurrence of metonymy. It is implicitly inferred from its types and creates semantic change in meaning when the nonliteral meaning is employed. Types of metonymy are determined concerning their purposes in both languages. Arabic and English have certain similar purposes of metonymy. For example, in both languages, metonymy serves the purposes of shortness, economy, and dubbing. Metonymy in Arabic as well as in English can be employed in speech and writing and has various categorizations. It is also expressed by all different word categories, but commonly in nouns in both languages.

6.2 Points of Contrast

or Yule (2003:122) however, metonymy is a type of relationship based on a close connection in everyday use. He (Ibid.) mentioned three types of relations:

Container-Content (bottle-coke; can-juice), a whole-part relation (car-wheel; house-roof) and representative symbol (king-crown; president-the White House)

Metonymy in Arabic is apparent and can be simply recognized from other tropes such as metaphor and synecdoche. However, metonymy in English is sometimes confused with metaphor and synecdoche as some scholars do not differentiate between metonymy and the other two terms: metaphor and synecdoche. Panther and Radden (1999, 1) pointed out that Aristotle did not differentiate between metonymy and metaphor and classified metonymy as part of metaphor (Qtd in Muhammad, 2017). Similarly, some scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980,36) as mentioned above, classified synecdoche as a subtype of

metonymy. Metonymy in Arabic received ample interest from Arab linguists, especially the relationship between denotative and metonymical meanings of words. It is much more detailed and strictly categorized. Although metonymy in Arabic and English share some types and purposes, metonymy in English lacks certain types as well as purposes and vice versa. This can be seen through the different types of metonymy in Arabic such as metonymy of an attribute, metonymy of the attributed entity, and metonymy of attribution. Also, metonymy in English lacks some purposes that Arabic uses such as euphemism, glorification, greatness, and majesty. More importantly, metonymic expressions in Arabic are very condensed with figures of speech and have no straightforward equivalence, especially when scholars attempt to translate them. Therefore, they need to transfer the figures of speech into the target language so as not to have problems in translation. Finally, unlike English metonymy is very common in Arabic.

7. Conclusion

This study provides an exploration of metonymic expressions as an important semantic and lexical phenomenon in Arabic and English. It has been concluded that metonymy is used broadly in both Arabic and English and is considered a semantic, lexical, and stylistic device allegorically employed to present vividness and add an aesthetic value to the text as a powerful cognitive device of conceptualization. The study shows how metonymy is culture-bound, and its understanding depends on socio-cultural, religious, and educational values as well as the norms of the society. It has been discussed at length and there are similarities and differences in both languages in terms of types and purposes. Although the concept of metonymy is approached differently by linguists in both languages, it is rather similar and follows the same rules. It is defined as the replacement of one word by another based on congruity and there should be a relation between semantic features of the two entities. Metonymy is based on semantic principles and causes a change in meaning when the indirect meaning is used instead of the literal one. Furthermore, realizing it relies on the context, tenor, and understanding of the relationship between the two entities as well as the socio-cultural background of the society.

Metonymy in Arabic is clearly distinguished from other tropes, especially metaphor and synecdoche. On the other hand, metonymy in English is confused with other tropes such as metaphor and synecdoche. Arab and Western linguists followed various methods in classifying types of metonymies and explaining their purposes. It can be said that metonymy has different yet similar types and functions in Arabic and English. Peter Newmark (1988) maintains that the translation of any figurative expression “is the epitome of all translation” (113). Since metonymy is culture-specific and is highly loaded with connotative meaning, in most cases metonymic expressions pose challenging problems for translators ending in most cases in a great loss of their aesthetic, and rhetoric. and semantic meanings. A conflict usually ensues as the translation of a metonymy between cultures that are remote as in Arabic and English “always offers choices in the direction either of sense or an image, or a modification of one, or a combination of both...depending always, on the contextual factors”.

Hopefully, this paper has attempted to provide scholars interested in studying metonymy in both Arabic and English with insightful and descriptive information on its types and functions. Such information can serve translators specifically when trying to choose an appropriate translation procedure.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

The author declared no potential conflict of interest.

Funding Disclosure

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency.

References

- Abed Al-Haq, Fawwaz. and Ahmad Al-Sharif. 2008. A Comparative Study of Metaphorical Conceptualizations of Happiness and Anger in English and Arabic. *Journal of USChina Foreign Language* 6(11)-5.
- Al-Hajji, Hamid. 2004. Arabic metonymy and its translation into English. *Al-Balq'a Journal for Research and Studies*.10,2.
- Al-Hashmi, Ahmad.1994. *Jawaher Al-Balaghah*. Dar Al-Fiqr. Lebanon
- Al-Jahiz, Abu Othman. 1948. *Al-Baydn wa Al-Tabyin*. Vol. 4. Cairo: Matbat Al-Talf wa Al-Tarjamah
- Al-Jurjani, Abd Al-Qahir.1983. *Secrets of Eloquence*. Dar Al-Masireh. Beirut.
- Al-Mubarid, Abi Al-Abbas. 1956. *Al-Kamel fi Al-Lugha Waladab*.Vol.2. Nahdat Misr Press, Cairo.
- Al-Sakaki, Abu Yacoub. 1987.Miftah Al-Ulum Dar Al-Kutub Al-ilmiyeh, Lebanon.
- Barcelona, Antonio. 2011. Reviewing the properties and prototype structure of metonymy. In Antonio Barcelona, Reka Benczes and Ruiz de Mendoza (Eds.) *Defining metonymy in cognitive linguistics: Towards a consensus view (7-57)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Barcelona, Antonio, and Soriano Cristina. 2004. Metaphorical conceptualization in English and Spanish. *European Journal of English Studies*,8- 3: 295-308
- Burkhart, Armin and Brigitte Nerlich, B. 2010. *Tropical truth(s): The epistemology of metaphor and other tropes*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Deroche, Charles. 2012. Metaphor, metonymy, language learning, and translation. Doctoral thesis, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Díaz-Vera, Javier. 2015. *Metaphor and metonymy across time and cultures*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter.
- Doblhofer, Karl. 1990. *The Morphology and Syntax of English: An Introduction*. London: Andre Deutsch
- Enos. 2013. *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to Information Age*. London: Routledge.
- Fromkin, Victori, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams. (2011). *An Introduction to Language*. New York: Thomson and Henle. <https://discoveryabhihit.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/fromkin-and-rodman-an-introduction-to-language.pdf>
- Ibn Manthour. Mohammed. 1970.Mujam *clean Al-Arab*. Dar Sader, Lebanon.
- <http://wiki.dorar-aliraq.net/lisan-alarab/%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A>
- Ismail, Shawqi. & Eman Adeeb. 2013. A Comparative Study of Antonomasia in English and Arabic. *Research Gate*.https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309609518_A_Comparative_Study_of_Antonomasi_a_in_English_and_Arabic
- Kaplan, David. 1989. *Demonstratives*. In Almog Joseph, John Perry and Howard Wettstein (Eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kovecses, Zoltan., & Gunter Radden, 1998. Metonymy: Developing a cognitive linguistic view. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 9, 37-78.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Turner. 1989. *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Matzner, Sebastian. 2016. *Rethinking Metonymy Literary Theory and Poetic Practice from Pindar to Jakobson*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mahdi, Ahmed. 2009. Metonymy in English and Arabic. *Academic Scientific Journal*. Vol.12. (1): pp 7-20.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary. 2020. Merriam Springfield, Massachusetts.
- Muhammad, Ali. 2017. Translating metonymy in the Holy Quran: Surat Al -Nisa as a case study. MA thesis. The American University of Sharjah.
- Nerlich, Brigitte and David Clarke. 2001. Serial metonymy. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 2(2).
- Newmark, Peter. 1988. *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Oxford Learner's Dictionary. 2020. Pearson Education Limited. England
- Panther, Klaus. & Gunter Radden. 1999. *Metonymy in Language and Thought*. Amsterdam: Benjamin Publishing House.
- Pickthall, Muhammad Marmaduke. 2001. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.
- Reddy, Michael. 1979. *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press
- Rubba, Johanna. 2006. Terms and Concepts for Metaphorical and Metonymic Analysis
- Ziegeler, Debra. 2007...*Aspects of Meaning Construction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Yule, George. 1996. *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge. University Press.
- Sheikhun, Mohammed. 1974. *Al-Balaghah Al-Wafeyeh*. 4th Edition. Dar Al-Bayan, Cairo.
- Shunnaq, Abdullah. 1993. 'Lexical Incongruence in Arabic-English Translation Due to Emotiveness in Arabic', in *Turjuman*.2 (2): pp. 37-63.
- Skrebnev, Yvision. 1994. *Fundamentals of English Stylistics: Textbook for Institutes and faculties of foreign languages*. Moscow: Higher wk.
- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2015): Fourth Edition. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: Accessed on 7/6/ 2016.[http:// ww. Bartleby.com161/](http://ww.Bartleby.com161/)
- Warren, Beatrice. 2006. Referential metonymy. Lund University, Sweden. ResearchGate
- Webster, William. (1900). *English: Composition and literature*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company
- Yule, George. 2010. *The Study of Language*. Fourth Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/my/files/5913/6689/9826/8769_Study_Guide_updated_170610.pdf
- Zuck, Roy. 1996. *Rightly Divided: Readings in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Michigan: Kregel Publications