

**A Study of Metaphorical Language in Afsaneh Shabannejad's
Adolescent Poetry in Three Collections *Singing Glass, The Bird
Said I Am a Poet and An Impatient Poem* from the Perspective of
Cognitive Linguistics**

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Introduction

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is the basis of human thought in all mental and conceptual domains, and metaphorical language reveals the relationship between human's language, mind and social and physical experiences. Afsaneh Shabannejad is one of the cotemporary poets for adolescents who uses metaphorical language to create poetic imagery and express abstract concepts. In her poems for adolescents, due to the development of their cognitive powers, she uses more complex similes and metaphors in comparison with her poems for children. These metaphors reveal multiple mental images about social-philosophical issues, ontological problems, love and loneliness during adolescence. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze her use of metaphorical language from a cognitive point of view to understand her rhetorical techniques and her process of thinking.

Methodology, Review of Literature and Purpose

From an analytical-descriptive approach, this study undertakes the analysis of metaphorical language in Shabannejad's poems for adolescents (age group D) from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. Case studies for this research are poems in three poetry collections, *An Impatient Poem*, *The Bird Said I Am a Poet*, and *Singing Glass*.

There are few studies from a cognitive point of view on the rhetorical aspects of Shabannejad's works and her ability in employing metaphors and imagery appropriate for the level of understanding of adolescents. Furthermore, these few studies have analyzed her poetic metaphors in parallel with other rhetorical aspects and with a traditional method. Also, without regard to age difference, they have categorized all poems as belonging to children's literature.

The purpose of this study is to see how the poet uses metaphorical language to represent mental concepts objectively and enhance the richness of the images. The metaphorical language is studied with regards to its function, frequency of use, and various directional, ontic and structural metaphors. These are factors which help her express the thoughts of her adolescent audience.

Discussion

Shabannejad uses metaphorical language which is compatible with the cognitive development of her audience. She makes use of conceptual metaphors to depict the life and concerns of adolescents and to show their mentalities. Three types of conceptual metaphors (ontic, structural and directional) give a clear picture of the philosophical and emotional moments and abstract concepts in the minds of adolescents.

Ontological conceptual metaphors comprise the intellectual basis of the poems. She has chosen ontology and materiality, human, container, place, plant, mass, music and food as the main concepts of this domain. These concepts provide an experimental-visual basis for thinking and evoke the sympathy of the audience; for example, she uses the domain of plants to talk about dynamism and the growth of thought, and the domain of place to talk about stoppage and the stability of thought.

For structural metaphor, the poet uses the scheme “life is a journey” as the basis for two schemes, “to go is to reach” and “to stay is to be alone”. These two schemes explain two good and bad dimensions of the same scheme and are the basis for expressing concepts such as death, life, love and happiness in the illustrations. The scheme “to stay is to be alone” is more obvious in the collection *An Impatient Poem*; and the scheme “to go is to reach” is more obvious in two collections, *The Bird Said I Am a Poet* and *Singing Glass*.

Directional metaphors in the works of Shabannejad are divided into directions up, down, horizontal and central. The horizontal direction is supposed to signify movement and functions as a kind of introduction to the scheme “life is a journey.” Movement and excitement is shown with horizontal conceptual direction. When illustrations have a sorrowful overtone and express concepts such as sorrow and impatience, the direction is downward. The downward conceptual direction is also used to depict states such as downfall and drowning. Centrality is the basis of creation of pictures about the hero of the heart which is the most important concept in adolescence. Central metaphor is frequently used in all three collections. The poet aims to

depict concepts of movement, dynamism, happiness and goodness by the use of directional metaphors.

Conclusion

Studying the metaphorical language of the three poetry collections *Singing Glass*, *The Bird Said I am a Poet* and *An Impatient Poem* reveals that the dominant metaphor in Shabannejad's poetry is the ontological metaphor with concepts such as object, human, place, container, plant, food, mass and sound. The poet uses this type of metaphor to make the mental concepts and concerns of adolescents more tangible. The basic scheme in the structural metaphor of Shabannejad is "life is a journey", which is introduced by two schemes of "to go is to reach" and "to stay is to be alone". By connecting the two domains of metaphor in her structural metaphor, Shabannejad manages to depict deep concepts of life such as love, death, dynamism and happiness which are encountered by adolescents in a serious manner.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, adolescent poetry, Afsaneh Shabannejad

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