

Studying Metonymy in Persian: Theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models¹

Raheleh Gandomkar²
Omid Tabibzadeh³

Received: 2014/12/27
Accepted: 2015/03/17

Abstract

Metonymy is one of the most important processes of semantic change in language, which besides receiving a high degree of attention by rhetoricians and historical semanticists, has been, at least for three decades, considered by cognitive semanticists as a process at work in everyday speech. The theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (LCCM) proposed by Vyvyan Evans in 2006 in the form of an article and within the framework of cognitive semantics explains how meaning functions in language, especially based on metaphoric and metonymic processes and how the speakers understand these processes. Based on this theory, words do not have ‘meanings’ in and of themselves. The meaning of a word is subordinate to the utterance in which it occurs. The present article studies this theory with data in the Persian language, evaluating the

¹ (DOI): 10.22051/JLR.2015.1840

² Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Allameh Tabataba'i University (Corresponding author); r.gandomkar@atu.ac.ir

³ Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, Bu-Ali Sina University; o.tabibzadeh@basu.ac.ir

process of metonymy within LCCM framework. It concludes that first, distinguishing absolute meaninglessness in words, in a word-based approach, is essentially considered a methodological problem. Second, one cannot synchronically distinguish a process called metonymy, especially in its traditional definition; instead, it should be considered a process based on ‘decreasing’ on the syntagmatic axis, not a process based on the proximity of two concepts on the paradigmatic axis. Thus, words can be considered as units that have meaning when decontextualized, but are not ‘meaningful’. Such a view liberates us from the troublesome framework of word-based approaches.

Keywords: *meaning-construction, decreasing, metonymy, Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models Theory, Cognitive Semantics.*