Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile in Imam Ali bin Abi Talib's Speech

المعاني الإيحائية في كلام الإمام علي

الخطبة الشقشيقية أنموذجاً

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Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile ...........................................(32)
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متناطلة المعاني الإيحائية في كلام الإمام علي: الخطبة الشقشقية أنوشجا

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ملخص البحث

تعد المعاني الإيحائية خاصة معاني الصيغ البلاغية إحدى سلوكات التراكيب اللغوية. وتقصى الدراسة الراهنة بعضًا من هذه المعاني المستعملة في الخطابات الدينية، ودورها في إياض رسالة المتحدث إلى الجمهور. قد وقع الاختيار على كلمة الإمام علي (الع) خاصة خطبه المعروفة بالشقشقية مادحة للتحليل في هذا البحث الذي يفترض أن الإمام علي (الع) يستعمل في خطبه صيغة بلاغية للتعبير عن أفكاره ومعانيه تعبيرا غير مباشر و(1) إنه (الع) يميل إلى الإيحاء بمعانيه عبر استعمال التشبيه والكتابة لتحقيق أكثر من غرض واحد.

وقبل الشروع بالجانب التطبيقي للبحث، قدم الباحثون خلفية نظرية له وتبناو أنواع أرجوز (1974) السياقي وترجمة رضا (2011) للخطبة الشقشقية. وقد مضت الدراسة عبر التشبيه تحديد التشبيه والكتابة فيها لتصور الطلعة التي وظف الإمام علي (الع) تلك الصيغة البلاغية لأيام رسالتها في سياق حرج جدا. فتضمنت الدراسة إلى أنه (الع) قد استعمل التشبيه والكتابة في خطابه السياسي لتحقيق فوائد معينة. وقد أظهرت الدراسة فيما تقصته أن الخطيب...
Connotative meanings, particularly in figures of speech, are one of the semantic behaviours of linguistic structures. The current paper investigates some of these meanings in Islamic political discourse and their role in conveying the speaker's intended message to the audience. For many reasons, Imam Ali's speech, in one of his famous sermons, ash-shiqshiqiyyah sermon, has been selected as data of analysis. It is hypothesized here that Imam Ali's sermon (1) uses figures of speech to indirectly express his ideas and intended meanings, and (2) tends to connote such meanings to achieve more than one purpose particularly via metonymy and simile.

Before tackling the practical part a section introduces the theoretical background of the study. Adopting Hymes' (1974) contextual model and Reza's (2011) version of translation of the examined data, the present study has gone through ash-shiqshiqiyyah for its figures of speech, particularly metonymy and simile, in order to show the way Imam Ali employs such figures to convey his message in a very politically critical situation. The study has reached the conclusion that metonyms and similes are used in the Islamic political discourse to gain certain advantages. In what has been examined, it has been observed that the addresser used them to connote his qualifications as a caliph and his real paternity and leadership of the nation and his tendency to preserve the Islamic unity.

1. Introduction

Linguists, particularly semanticists and rhetoricians, study the meanings of linguistic units from different standpoints. They point out that identical meanings can be transformed through several ways due to different aspects such as their impact, meaningfulness, and rhetoric and so on. Along with this vain, one of the attractive semantic behaviours of linguistic structures is the use of
connotative meanings of figures of speech. Hence, the current paper investigates these meanings in Islamic political discourse and their role in conveying the speaker's intended message to the audience. The researchers choose Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's (henceforth Imam Ali) speech as a sample. One of his famous sermons, ash-shiqshiyyah sermon, has been selected as data of analysis. The reasons for selecting an Islamic political speech, particularly that of Imam Ali, are simple. Imam Ali represents a typical political as well as linguistic exemplar in the Islamic history. In addition, his rhetorical language attracts much attention of linguists. Finally, the time of producing the sermon was full of decisive events whose effects remain up to the current moment. For the significance of the context of situation in interpreting and understanding texts, the context of situation in which the selected data was used has been referred to and the adopted contextual model is Hymes (1974) while the adopted version of translation of the examined data is Reza's (2011). It is hypothesized here that Imam Ali's sermon (1) uses figures of speech to indirectly express his ideas and intended meanings, and (2) tends to connote such meanings to achieve more than one purpose particularly via metonymy and simile. The study has reached some conclusions.

2. Theoretical Background

3. Connotative Meaning

The philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was the first who distinguished between at least two types of meaning that may be conveyed by words: denotative and connotative. The former, which is also called central, conceptual or referential meaning, refers to the relationship between words and the concrete objects and activities in the physical world (Wilkins, 1978: 119); the latter results from some emotional factors that a lexical item carries. These emotional factors attach different emotional aspects or overtones to the use of the lexical item (Gairns and Redman, 1986: 18). In the same vein, Yule (1986: 92) refers to the connotative meaning as a trend in language directly related to the speaker's feelings and psychological attitude when expressing something; this
in turn may produce affective responses in people towards the addressed matter. Other types of meaning such as expressive and evoked ones are included within connotative meaning (Jeffries, 1998: 1109). Hence, the connotative meaning can be considered as an umbrella for a family of subsidiary meanings. Being seen in this perspective, connotative meaning can be conveyed by rhetorical figures. The latter statement will be the task of the following sections.

3.1 Rhetorical Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are considered as the main source of connotative or emotive meanings (Shunnaq, 1993: 50). They are generally divided into two major categories: schemes and tropes. The former involves patterns of form while the latter concerns lexical or semantic deviation of some kind (Wales, 1990: 398). The latter, however, is seen as a way of turning a word away from its normal meaning, or turning it into something else. In other words, a trope may twist words away from their usual meanings or collocations. It consists of a play on words: using a word in a way other than what is considered its literal or normal form. Leech (1969) describes tropes as foregrounded irregularity of content and anomaly.

Generally, rhetorical figures perform some functions. In this sense, Shunnaq (1993: 40) states that rhetorical figures may add vividness to a speech because they are strongly connected to the connotative meaning and emotional aspect of language. In addition, Zuck (1996: 67) states that figures of speech are related to the form in which words are used out of their ordinary sense, place, or manner for the purpose of attracting attention to what is meant. Moreover, figures of speech are often used for emphasis or clarity although clarity may suffer from their use.

Abdul-Raof (2006: 10) argues that rhetoric in Arabic is primarily concerned with the signification of a given lexical item and its connotative meanings. Arabic rhetoric is not concerned with the grammatical functions of sentence constituents, i.e. with the words that constitute a given sentence. Rhetoric, therefore, is a
means for an effective communication. This study deals with two dominant rhetorical figures 'metonymy and simile'.

2.2.1 Metonymy

Metonymy is a term in semantics and stylistics referring to a figure of speech wherein a name of an attribute of an entity is used instead of the entity itself (Cuddon, 1998/1999: 510; Crystal, 2003: 291). In semiotic terms, metonymy is an indexical sign with a function that involves using one signified to stand for another signified that is directly related to it or closely associated with it in some way. Metonyms are based on various indexical relationships between signifieds, notably the substitution of effect for cause. It can be seen as being based on substitution by adjuncts (things that are found together) or on functional relationships. In other words, there is a directly or logically contiguous relationship between the substituted word and its referent.

In Arabic rhetoric, metonymy is referred to as (al-kinnyah). It is a rhetorical mode of discourse which is more effective because of its succinctness and allusion, i.e. implicit reference, and is a form of hyperbole. Linguistically, the expression (al-kinnyah) is a nominalised noun which is morphologically related to the verb (to allude to, to use metonymically). Thus, metonymy rhetorically signifies the allusion to someone or something without specifically referring to their identity (Abdul-Raof, 2006: 233).

As for its function, metonymy may be employed to allude to a characteristic feature of someone and cover it up with a given linguistic expression, in both praise and dispraise for instance, instead of explicitly mentioning it. It may be recurrently employed in a discourse wherein the communicator, for fear of persecution, resorts to metonymy, or rather ambiguous metonymy, instead of explicit reference to something s/he is against (ibid.: 234).

2.2.2 Simile

Simile is a figure of speech involving an explicit comparison between two things using connective words ‘like’ or ‘as’. Lucas (1992: 223) defines simile as “an explicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common
... in a way as to clarify and enhance an image" (Cuddon, 1998/1999: 830). Abdul-Raof (2006: 198) states that simile refers to someone or something sharing a feature of someone or something else where a common signification is established through one of the simile particles or the relevant context.

Like other figures of speech, simile has a number of functions; Corbet (1990: 479) mentions that a simile clarifies the analogy by calling out exactly what is being compared as in 'He had a posture like a question mark'. Further, the use of simile adds meaning by calling to attention the process of comparison.

Simile in Arabic rhetoric is referred to as (art of likening). It is an aesthetic and skilful mode of discourse whose major aims are to clarify an opinion or feeling, to bring two significations close to each other, and to compare a given entity with another in praise, dispraise, ornamentation, or repugnance. Therefore, simile, as a linguistic and aesthetic skill, varies from one tex-producer to another in quality, effectiveness, and most importantly, the impact upon the text-receiver.

3.2 Context of Situation

It seems necessary to discuss the context of situation in which the selected sermon takes place. Such a context is believed to assist in showing the addresser's intended connotations. The participants in the speech event, the relationships between them, the topic they are talking about, the time of uttering the speech event, and the addresser's intentions beyond the speech events are all elements that play a significant role in discovering the connotations of figures of speech. Hence, some definitions and notions of the context of situation would be useful to be introduced here.

Context of situation plays a weighty role in understanding and interpreting texts. As such, many theorisers such as Hymes (1974), Halliday and Hassan (1985), Biber (1988) and others have tackled the nature and elements of this linguistic phenomenon.

Crystal (2003: 104) considers meaning as a multiple phenomenon where its several aspects are related to the characteristics of the real world and to the various levels of
linguistic analysis. In this sense, he (ibid.) specifies the concept of context of situation to the whole set of the external-world features considered to be relevant to the analysis of an utterance at these levels. Cruse (2006: 35) considers context of situation as "an essential factor in the interpretation of utterances and expressions. In fact, real world context is only one aspect which determines the illocutionary force of the utterance".

In this study the adopted contextual model is Hymes' (1974) for its comprehensiveness and adequacy as well as its appropriateness for the aims of this study. For Hymes (1974), the relationship between language and context is marked as a close interdependent one. He (ibid.) in James (1980: 100-1) points out that although codal (textual) linguistic information is important in communication, there is a necessity to non-codal information (contextual) for successful communication. In communication, the speaker expresses a specific communicative intention which the hearer must identify if communication is to be successful. The communicating individuals must be able to identify the utterance constraints to which speech events are subject and produce utterances that conform to them.

Hymes' (1974) model encompasses several factors including participants, setting, topic or content, channel, key, code and purpose. Some of these contextual factors seem unnecessary for the interpretation of the texts. As such, only four factors, viz participants, setting, topic or content, and purpose, will be employed in this study because of their impact and role on the interpretation and analysis of the data.

2.3.1 Participants

Participants refer to the persons, addresser and the addressee, who participate in the speech event. The addresser is the speaker or writer who produces the utterance while the addressee is the hearer or reader who receives that utterance. Besides, the presence of over hearers, i.e., audience, may contribute to the specification of the speech event (ibid.: 45).
As far as ash-shiqshiqiyah sermon is concerned, the addresser is Imam Ali who is one of the Muslims caliphs whose right in caliphate was usurped by other caliphs. He considered himself the only legal caliph after the Prophet Muhammad while the others were illegal. The addressees were the Muslims who had witnesses all the events; their role, concerning usurpation caliphate, was negative on the part of Imam Ali.

### 2.3.2 Setting

Setting refers to the place and time of event and to the physical relations of the interactions with respect to posture and gesture and facial expression (Hymes, 1974: 45). James (1980: 100) states that the element of setting has an essential impact on determining the form of the linguistic message involved between interactants.

Concerning the selected sermon, the period of its uttering indicates a crucial point in understanding the addresser's aim. The sermon came at the end of Imam Ali's period of governing. As such, he blamed Muslims for their negative role throughout the preceding events and proved their wrong orientation towards these events.

### 2.3.3 Topic or Content

If someone knows what is being talked about, the expectations will be further constrained (Hymes, 1974: 45). James (1980: 100) thinks that topic refers to what participants are talking about. Thus, the nature of the topic contributes to the determination of the language form the speaker uses.

The sermon talks about the caliph of Muslims. The addresser offers controversies concerning nominating the legal caliph. Muslims suffered so much during the preceding period. Imam Ali considered the first three caliphs illegal ones because they did not obey the Prophet's will in choosing him the caliph. After the Prophet's death, Muslims disagreed on the nomination of Imam Ali. Instead they elected Abu Bakir as a caliph who, in turn, recommended just prior to his death Omer bin Alkhaaab to be the second caliph. Shortly before his death, the latter formed a committee, consisting of six members, whose task was to select the
next caliph. They selected Othman ibn Affaan. Imam Ali received caliphate after the death of Othman ibn Affaan when Muslims forced him to be their caliph.

2.3.4 Purpose

Purpose refers to the communicative intentions the participants want to convey via the words, i.e., to complain, request, apologize, etc. (Hymes, 1974: 45). James (1980: 101) argues that much attention focuses on the purpose or communicative functions of language.

The addressee's purpose seems to be multiple. He showed his real status towards the caliphate through showing his qualifications and his adversaries' disqualifications, blamed his audience's negative role concerning installing him the caliph, stated his sufferance from the wrong treatments of the caliphs, and so on.

4. Data Description

As for its topic or content, the data under investigation, ash-Shiqshiqiyyah sermon, can be taken to reveal several stages through which Imam Ali clarifies the status of the Islamic nation from the Prophet Muhammad's death up to Imam Ali's period of ruling. The first stage deals with his qualifications as a caliph, the second states the way of installing the preceding caliphs, the third shows the conditions and affairs of Muslims during the governments of the other caliphs, and finally it refers to the way of installing Imam Ali and what happens during his government.

5. Data Analysis

In the light of the previous theoretical basis of metonymy, simile and context of situation, the analysis will be conducted to examine the connotations of these rhetorical figures only for their copious presence in Imam Ali's speech, particularly ash-Shiqshiqiyyah Sermon. Connotative meaning will be referred to as CM. As such, the following connotations are observed:

4.1 Connoting his efficiency and adequacy through offering his qualifications which are unfeasible to others. Texts (1 and 2) indicate these qualifications.

6. Text 1
Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile ......................................................... (42)

(محلي منها محل القطب من الرحمى)
(…my position in relation to it was
the same as the position of the axis
in relation to the hand-mill)
(Reza, 2011: 50)

**CM:** He resembles his position to the Islamic caliphate like the
pole of the quern. Like the pole of the quern, the Islamic caliphate
cannot be administered without Imam Ali as the caliph. Connotatively, he uses simile to express his status and imminence
to the Prophet Muhammad and his qualifications to be the caliph
after the Prophet.

Text 2

(ﻲﻨﺤﺪر ﻋﻨﻲ ﺍﻟﺴﻴﻞ و ﻻ ﻳﺮﻗﻰ ﺍﱄ ﺍﻟﻄﺒر)
(…the flood water flows down
from me the birds cannot fly up to
me) (Reza, 2011: 50)

**CM:** Imam Ali states his status as a towering mountain where
water erupts from it and birds, which fly away in the sky, could not
fly to the top of such a mountain. Thus, connotatively, Imam Ali
uses 'descending of water, which stands for all good qualities, and
ascending of birds' to connote his loftiness and eminence; he is
superior to those who took his position as the caliph concerning
knowledge, discernment, wisdom, justice and so on. On the other
hand, what others have is just flowing out of him and they never
reach his status. Thus, he connotes the inferiority of those who
usurp his right.

4.2 Connoting his sufferance, pain and tolerance so as to safe-keep
the Islamic unity by leaving fight and distressfully keeping silence
with containment. This can be touched in texts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Text 3

(ﬁﺲﻟﺪﺕ ﺩﻭﻧﻬﺎ ﺛﻮﺑﺎ ﻭﻃﻮﻳﺖ ﻋﻨﻬﺎ ﻛﺸﺤﺎ
(I put a curtain against the
caliphate and kept myself detached
from it) (Reza, 2011: 50)
CM: One of the strategies that Imam Ali followed in safeguarding Islamic unity is to avoid war and leave the formal governing of the Islamic nation then. Thus, by the use of 'سدنلت' and 'طوبيت', he connotes his ignorance and relinquishment of the caliphate.

**Text 4**

أو اصير على طخية عميماء

(...or endure calmly the blinding darkness)

(Reza, 2011: 50)

CM: He describes the other caliphs' choppy period of ruling which is full of unwise issues. Although such a manner of governing seems unsatisfactory for him and for the nation according to him, Imam Ali prefers patience to war so as to save Muslims' unity and blood. Thus, he used 'طخية' وعميماء to connote his tolerance upon such an unacceptable situation.

**Text 5**

فتصبرت و في العين قذى وفي الحلق شجا

(So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation 'of mortification' in the throat)

(Reza, 2011: 50)

CM: Here, Imam Ali introduces another picture of his interior sufferance. He believed that fighting caused sedition among Muslims while silence caused skewness away from the original way of Islam. As such, he tolerated the latter because it was the best of the worst things. Thus, he used 'قذى' وشجا to connote severe pain and hard sufferance.
Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile ............................................( 44)

Text 6

(لكنني أسفنت آذ أسفوا، وطرت إذ طاروا)
(But I remained low when they were low and flew high when they flew high)
(Reza, 2011: 52)

CM: Imam Ali shifts from condemnation to a superficial agreement with the public view. He did so because the public advantage demanded such a sacrifice. This agreement represents a callous phase of his sufferance. Connotatively, the words 'أسف' and 'طار' expressed his acceptance to the existing situation.

Text 7

(وطفقت ارتشي بين أن أصول بيد جداً)
(Then I began to think whether I should assault ...)
(Reza, 2011: 50)

CM: He describes the case of his proponents who are few and laggard. Proponents of the leader are like the hand by which he holds the sword. His faithful proponents were very few and they could not gain war against their enemies since the latter were a lot. By the use of the phrase 'بيد جداً', he connoted his proponents' inadequacy and feebleness to fight his enemies with a hand which is almost cut off and unable to carry a sword.

Text 8

(يهرم فيها الكبير و يشب فيها الصغير)
(…wherein the grown up are feebled and the young grow old)  (Reza, 2011: 50)

CM: Imam Ali shows the impact of such a long and hard sufferance. What he had had could cause even children to be old and old could be grizzly. These sentences connote such negative effects and the degree of sufferance.

Text 9
(...) And this thing and that thing) (Reza, 2011: 52)

CM: In the phase of choosing the third caliph, a committee was formed to select the caliph. Imam Ali was a member of that committee. When he is compared with the other members, they worth nothing to him as owns various qualities. Thus, he connoted them as unknown persons or entities by the use of 'هن' which is an indefinite pronoun in Arabic

4.3 Connoting the materialistic orientation and personal interests of the previous caliphs. Texts (10, 11 and 12) points out this case clearly

Text 10

فيما عجبناً بينا هو يستقبلها في حبه إذ عقدها الآخر بعد وفاته -

لشد ما تشرح من ضرعيها

(It is strange that during his lifetime he wished to be released from the caliphate but he confirmed it for the other one after his death. No doubt these two shared its udders strictly among themselves) (Reza, 2011: 50)

CM: Imam Ali talks about the devolution of authority from the first caliph to the second. The process of transition was illegal because it was done without consulting the Muslims or depended on a recommendation from the Prophet. Therefore, Imam Ali expresses his astonishment as the second Caliph had left the caliphate to the third after he made use of it in full and to the lees. He described the process of rotation as sharing unearned booty. Metonymically, he connoted this sharing by using the sentence 'لشد ما تشرح من ضرعيها.'
CM: The addresser describes the state and behaviour of the officials at the third caliph's period. Their sole concern was the way of earning immense fortune excessively. Metonymically, Imam Ali employed the phrases 'خضامة الإبل' and 'نبتة الربيع' to connote the cupidity of the officials. The former phrase was used to state that the officials plunder the public treasury greedily in the same way that camels have grass when they are hungry as the camels' mouthful is the biggest among animals. The latter phrase was employed to indicate the officials' amount of voracity since the plants of spring are the softest and best among plants throughout the course of their growth.

Text 12

CM: This text explains the status of the third caliph as being haughty and proud. Besides, his main concern was his private property regardless Muslims' affairs. Metonymically, the words (نافجا حضنيه، بين نشيله ومختله) were used to express the aforementioned status.

4.4 Connoting the negative outcomes of the unqualified leaderships of the Islamic nation through offering different pictures of difficulties of living. The following text illustrates:
Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile ................................................. (47)

Text 13

(Consequently, by Allah people got involved in recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation)
(Reza, 2011: 52)

CM: here the text clarifies the outcomes of the wrong policies of the preceding caliphs. The public gained recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation as a result of such policies. Connotatively, the words (اعتراض and بخمط، شمس، تلون) were employed to indicate these outcomes.

4.5 Connoting inefficiency and inadequacy of other caliphs' administration of the affairs of the caliphate. Examples of such inadequacies are texts (14 and 15).

Text 14

(This one put the caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough. Mistakes were in plenty and so also the excuses therefore.)
(Reza, 2011: 50)

CM: the addresser introduces instability of the policies of the preceding caliphs because they did not have perfect cognizance in the affairs of caliphate. The Islamic caliphate had an erratic nature, as a bumpy land which has coarse touch. Besides, its nature causes a lot of hindrances. Metonymically, the words (حوزة خشناء بغلظ كلمها،)
Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile ........................................ (48)

(ويخشى مسها، ويكشر العثار فيها، والاعتذار منها) connoted the aforementioned inadequacies.

Text 15

«فصاحبهما كراكب الصعبة إن
أشنق لها خرم، وان أسلس لها تحمم»

(One in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein the very nostril would be slit, but if he let it loose he would be thrown.)
(Reza, 2011: 50-1)

CM: the addresser states the incapacity of the previous caliphs to lead the caliphate. The caliphate is like an unruly camel which requires a veteran knight to administer it. The caliphs were not veterans to administer the caliphate. The phrase (كراكب الصعبة) was used to connote the status of the caliphate. It indicates the arduousness of the caliphate in the era of the second caliph. At this period, it wallows from its right way. As a result, many disasters and calamities had occurred and the leader had no idea to remedy this situation.

4.6 Connoting the legitimacy of Imam Ali's caliphate, a condition which was absent for the previous caliphs. This legitimacy was represented by the consensus of Muslims who gathered around him in an attempt to convince him to be the caliph. In the following text, the phrases (كربضة الغنم) and (كعرف الضبع) were used.

Text 16

فما راعني الا والناس كعرف الضبع
الضبع إلي ... مجتمعين حوالي كربضة الغنم
At that moment, nothing took me by surprise, but the crowed of people rushing to me…… They collected around me like the herd of sheep and goats) (Reza, 2011: 52)

CM: he describes how crowd of Muslims and their insistence were. All the Muslims requested him to be the caliph. By using the phrase (كعَرف الضعيع), Imam Ali connotes the plenty of Muslims since the comb of the hyena contains dense hair while the phrase (كربيبة الغنم) connotes Muslims' insistence which resembles the herd of sheep and goats.

Text 17

(...I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders) (Reza, 2011: 54)

CM: the addresser expressed his endurances during his period of ruling. He wished to leave the caliphate because of such endurances, but he could not do it because the caliphate is legal duty. The text was used to it connotes the desire to leave the caliphate.

7. Conclusions

It has been concluded that metonyms and similes are used in the Islamic political discourse to perform specific connotations so as to gain certain advantages. It has seemed inadequate to depend on denotative meanings to convey the speaker's messages. In what has been examined, it has been observed that the addresser used them to connote his qualifications as a caliph, his real paternity and leadership of the nation and his preservation of Islamic unity, the materialistic orientation of the previous caliphs and their inefficiency at administering the affairs of Muslims, the negative outcomes of the unqualified caliphs and finally legitimacy of caliphate.
In addition to the aforementioned conclusions, other ones can be drawn. These can be considered as tools for achieving the previous ones. For example, the use of rhetorical figures raises emotions with a subject and correspondingly evokes emotional response from audience, make no overt reference to the unpleasant side of the subject, hide and cover the personality and identity of certain persons instead of mentioning their explicit names, beautify speech and brevity, exalt the meaning of certain words in the spirits of the addressees, awaken and draw the addressees' attention to such subjects, describe persons, and express interior sufferance of the addresser. The conclusions directly validate the two hypotheses of the study

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Connotative Meanings of Metonymy and Simile