

## Metaphor in the West and Iran: A Comparative Perspective

Reza Amini 

Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Research Center for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Tehran, Iran; [r.amini@ltr.tu.ac.ir](mailto:r.amini@ltr.tu.ac.ir)

### Article Type

Research Article

### Article History

Received

October 01, 2024

Received in Revised Form

October 31, 2024

Accepted

December 03, 2024

Published Online

April 23, 2025

### Keywords

metaphor;

rhetoric;

literature;

Iran;

the West;

cognitive linguistics

### ABSTRACT

In this article, the ideas of some prominent Iranian and Western scholars about metaphor are analyzed comparatively. In addition to “the introduction”, the article includes two main parts: in “Metaphor in the West”, the ideas of some well-known figures of the West such as Aristotle, Richards, Lakoff, and Johnson about metaphor are analyzed; and, in “metaphor in Iran”, the ideas of some prominent Iranian scientists concerning metaphor are reviewed and analyzed, namely, Raduyani, Jurjāni, and Sakkāki Khwārizmī. This research shows that in the West, the viewpoints of Aristotle concerning metaphor have made the foundation of most of the discussions about metaphor even till the twentieth century. However, the ideas of Lakoff and Johnson in the 1980s changed the old consolidated Aristotelian-based perspectives toward metaphor. The research also indicates that there is a close similarity between the ideas of Iranian classical scholars' viewpoints about metaphor and those of Aristotle, and the viewpoints of some of them are also close to what latter has been said about metaphor in the framework of cognitive linguistics.

**Cite this Article:** Amini, R. (2025). Metaphor in the West and Iran: A comparative perspective. *Literary Text Research*, 29(103), 112-125. <https://doi.org/10.22054/ltr.2024.82247.3919>



© 2025 by Allameh Tabataba'i University Press

**Print ISSN:** 2251-7138 **Online ISSN:** 2476-6186

**Publisher:** Allameh Tabataba'i University Press

**Homepage:** <https://ltr.atu.ac.ir>

**DOI:** 10.22054/ltr.2024.82247.3919



**ATU  
PRESS**



## 1. Introduction

Culler (2001, p. 210) says "... today metaphor is no longer one figure among others but the figure of figures ....". This shows that in the past few decades, "metaphor" has attracted much attention in humanities that seems to be the result of the central importance of metaphor in "cognitive linguistics", which has caused the study of this "figure" to find a special position not only in linguistics and literature but also in other fields of humanities. Cognitive linguists, such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, have given metaphor a particular position in language, and the entire intellectual and mental activities of humans. But even those who do not attach much importance to metaphor cannot ignore its significance, since "figurative language" plays an important part in communication and transforming meaning (Cohen, 1978; Sadock, 1979).

In recent decades, several conferences have been held on metaphor, and scientific journals such as *Critical Inquiry* have published special issues on metaphor (Culler, 2001, p. 209). Moreover, researching metaphors in different languages has flourished, in a way that through searches on the internet, we come across several books, proceedings of scientific conferences, and journal articles on metaphors. Regarding the importance of metaphor in literary and linguistic studies, in this article, we study the viewpoints presented about metaphor, in the West and Iran, to be able to answer this question: "What are the similarities and dissimilarities of the views presented in the West and Iran about metaphor?"

## 2. Methodology and Method

This article is based on the review and analysis of the views expressed in the West and Iran, from the past until now, about metaphor. To do this, the views of several famous Iranian and Western rhetoricians and scholars on metaphor have been examined and conclusions have been drawn based on them. Therefore, this research is inductive in terms of research methodology, and analytical-descriptive in terms of method.

## 3. Metaphor in the West

Aristotle was the first person to write about metaphor in the West. Ortony (1979, p. 20) argues that any serious study of metaphor must begin with Aristotle, who categorizes nouns into ordinary or unfamiliar language, metaphor, and so on. Aristotle defines *metaphor* as a transfer based on similarity, analogy, and proportion (Henle, 1972). In *Rhetoric*, he introduced his famous theory of condensed simile, where metaphor is seen as a comparison shortened by removing the word *like*. For example, the metaphor "*Man is a wolf*" is the condensed form of the simile "*Man is like a wolf*" (Steinhart & Kitty, 1994). According to Aristotle, crafting a metaphor—an ornamental feature of language—requires special talent, as one must recognize relationships and similarities between things.

A large number of the famous logicians, theologians, and philosophers did not have a positive opinion on metaphor. For example, Nietzsche in a famous quote, considers it as something common and unimportant:

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions that we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins that have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. (Nietzsche, 1873, p. 117).

However, many metaphors are used in Nietzsche's language and writing, which shows the importance of metaphor in encoding meaning in the language of every human being, especially when he/she seeks to express semantic and emotional nuances. The number of biological and medical metaphors in Nietzsche's works is so high that it has attracted the attention of researchers. Researchers have listed several reasons for the high use of biological and medical metaphors in Nietzsche's works, namely "his well-documented medical crises", and "the fact that Nietzsche's texts are informed by the same hopes and anxieties that haunted the *fin-de-siècle* Europe in which he lived" (Moore, 2002, p. 1). But the more important point is that, according to Moore (p. 10), Nietzsche's works are a philosophical-literary mixture in which metaphor has an important place:

. . . Ever since Nietzsche's fame began to spread in the early 1890s, he had been lionized as the *Dichterphilosoph*, whose work was neither wholly philosophy nor wholly literature, but represented in some sense an unprecedented fusion of the two. But despite this acknowledgment, there was, as I have already intimated, no attempt to engage with Nietzsche at the level of language or metaphor. Only comparatively recently have his interpreters recognized that the conspicuous rhetorical flourishes, the multivocality, and seeming contradictoriness of his texts – in short, all those characteristic features which have so often frustrated those who have sought to distill the cognitive 'content' from the literally 'form' – are not (or at least not merely) the idiosyncrasies of an accomplished stylist, but may be interpreted as the expression of one of Nietzsche's most basic philosophical convictions: that all language is intrinsically rhetorical. Not only poetic modes of discourse but all linguistic functions – philosophy and science, even the abstract symbolism of mathematics and logic – are fundamentally, inescapably metaphorical.

What is mentioned in the last two sentences of the above quotation deserves special attention, because as we will see later, the main figures of cognitive linguistics expressed the same points about metaphor, and gave it a central position in human language and thinking. According to Moore, the trace of such ideas can be seen in Nietzsche's earliest writings that were delivered at the "University of Basle" during the winter semester of 1872-3: "One of the

major themes expressed in these lectures is the idea that metaphors and other rhetorical figures are not ornamental, nor is the realm of the figurative some semantic aberration, deriving from a fixed domain of literal meaning. The trope is not a peripheral, secondary linguistic phenomenon, but rather the very essence of language” (Moore, 2002, pp. 10-11). What Moore has said here about the importance of metaphor in Nietzsche’s thought is an explanation of his sentence that “... What is usually called language is all figuration” (Moore, 2002, p. 11).

When we examine Nietzsche’s views on metaphor, we see that it is not a repetition or retelling of Aristotle’s views. In Aristotle’s view, metaphor is “carrying one concept over to another” or “the transition from one logical place to another, from a ‘proper’ place to a figurative one”, to express or highlight a specific meaning. Kofman (1993, p. 15) believes that this Aristotelian definition of metaphor “could not be retained as such by Nietzsche since it is based on a division of the world into well-defined genera and species corresponding to essences, whereas for Nietzsche the essence of things is enigmatic, so genera and species are themselves but human, all-too-human metaphors. ‘Carrying over’ must not be understood here as a transition from one place to another: it must itself be taken as a metaphor which, ... condenses several meanings”.

Roman Jakobson has discussed metaphor and metonymy in connection with aphasia, as well as the two syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of language. According to him, there are different types of aphasia, all of which can be explained regarding “the faculty for selection and substitution or combination and contexture”. Selection and substitution “involves a deterioration of metalinguistic operations”, and combination and contexture “damages the capacity for maintaining the hierarchy of linguistic units”. Jakobson then continues to say that “the relation of similarity is suppressed in the former, the relation of contiguity in the latter type of aphasia. Metaphor is alien to the similarity disorder, and metonymy to the contiguity disorder” (Jakobson, 1971, p. 67). Another important point is that Jakobson does not limit the discussion of metaphor and metonymy and the issue of similarity and contiguity to the explanation of various types of aphasia, but expands it to other fields, including the field of poetry and “sign systems other than language”: “In poetry there are various motives which determine the choice between these alternants. The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy that underlies and predetermines the so-called ‘realistic’ trend, ...” (Jakobson, 1971, p. 69); And for non-verbal arts, Jakobson gives the examples from the history of painting in which “a salient example ... is the manifest orientation of cubism, where the object is transformed into a set of synecdoches; the surrealist painters respond with a patently metaphorical attitude” (Jakobson, 1971, pp. 69-70). In addition, Jakobson argues that in “poetry” metaphor, and in “prose” metonymy is dominant. Here, too, it is worth noting that Jakobson did not consider “metaphor” and “metonymy” to be specific or limited to the field of literature, and

expands it to the fields of non-verbal arts too; which brings his approach to “metaphor” close to the cognitive linguistics approach to this issue.

I. A. Richards, the English poet, rhetorician, and literary critic, emphasized the importance of metaphor in literary theory. Based on his ideas, we can say that through “close reading” of any “text” we see the metaphors are fundamental in its meaning. In “The Philosophy of Rhetoric”, Richards (1965, p. 90) claims that “... language is utterly unable to aid us except through the command of metaphor which it gives”. He believes that the very function of language is based on the metaphor it produces. Richards then continues to say “Throughout the history of Rhetoric, metaphor has been treated as a sort of happy extra trick with words, an opportunity to exploit the accidents of their versatility, something in place occasionally but requiring unusual skill and caution. In brief, a grace of ornament or *added* power of language, not its constitutive form” (Richards, 1965, p. 90). Notwithstanding this fact, Richards believes that metaphor is not ornamental to language, to add a special kind of meaning or color in a text, or to create a particular space. But it is an “omnipresent principle of language”, and something “constitutive” to it: “... we cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it, ... Even in the rigid language of the settled sciences we do not eliminate or prevent it without great difficulty” (Richards, 1965, p. 92).

For Richards, skill in using metaphors is important in creating great literary figures: “The Elizabethans, for example, were far more widely skilled in the use of metaphor - both in utterance and interpretation - than we are. A fact which made Shakespeare possible” (Richards, 1965, p. 94). Richards has also paid attention to the distinction between “dead” and “alive” metaphors, and the fact that the function of metaphors is based on the selection and transfer of some semantic features. He has also paid attention to the fact that in some cases it is not possible to distinguish which semantic components have been selected to be transferred in a metaphor. Richards also has used the terms “tenor” and “vehicle” to explain the metaphor. We see the use of terms with similar meanings in the writings of other researchers. For example, Henle (1958, p. 177) has discussed two semantic dimensions of metaphor that can be matched with Richard’s tenor and vehicle. However, Henle believes that “... there is an iconic element in metaphor”, since the meaning of metaphor, unlike ordinary words, is also based on creating images.

It is a clear point that the studies related to metaphor in the beginning, mainly, started with examining it in the literary text. As we have seen above, today’s studies on metaphor have focused increasingly on reviewing it in non-literary text. However, the modern explanation of the use of metaphor or the scientific frameworks that have been formed for its study in recent decades, have not been limited to non-literary texts and have been extended to the study of literary texts as well; so today metaphor in literary text is also studied with an interdisciplinary approach, and taking into account the findings of other scientific fields in which attention is paid to metaphor. In this regard, after pointing out that there are different approaches “that emphasize the *discontinuity* between metaphor in literature and metaphor in

non-literary language, and approaches that emphasize the *continuity* between metaphor in literature and metaphor in non-literary language”, Semino and Steen (2008, p. 233) say that “our view is that both approaches are correct, and that precise details about the distribution, function, and effect of metaphor in literature versus outside literature need to be collected and examined using corpus-linguistic and psycholinguistic studies”. The point expressed here by Semino and Steen indicates that it is not possible to draw a clear and definite boundary between the literary and non-literary matter, or in other words, literary language, and non-literary language. Rather, it should be accepted that any text - oral or written - can be literary to some degree; and in the same way, the number of figures of speech such as metaphors can be less or more in a text based on its degree of literariness. This is in line with what Semino and Steen have quoted from Carter (2004, p. 69):

The opposition of literary to non-literary language is an unhelpful one, and the notion of literary language as a yes/no category should be replaced by one that sees literary language as a continuum, a cline of literariness in language use with some uses of language being marked as more literary than others.

The next issue in this section is the “functional linguistics” look to metaphor. Functional linguistics, along with “cognitive linguistics” and “formal linguistics”, is one of the three dominant approaches in linguistics today (see Dabirmoghadam, 2022; for an introductory look at cognitive linguistics, see Vyvyan and Green, 2006). The attention of functional linguistics to metaphor is not as extensive and comprehensive as that of cognitive linguistics. However, the attention of people like Michael Alexander Kirkwood Holliday in his “Systemic Functional Grammar” to metaphor is another proof of its importance in studying language and literature. In three “metafunctions” of the grammar - “ideational”, “interpersonal” and “textual” metafunctions - there can be a metaphor (Halliday, 2014; Thompson, 2014). Believing in the existence of metaphor in language, in Systemic Functional Grammar, distinguishes this approach from classical and traditional views of metaphor, and brings it closer to the cognitive approach to metaphor that we will discuss further below.

In addition to what came above, in the Western world, other notable authors such as Donald Davidson, John Searle, and Max Black have done many effective studies on metaphor, and have examined metaphor from literary, linguistic, and philosophical perspectives. All these researches somehow emphasize the importance of metaphor in language, literature, philosophy, and understanding the human mind (see Davidson, 1980; Searle, 1979; Black, 1962). However, the studies that put metaphor in the spotlight were the studies of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. They showed that metaphor has a significant part in our life and thought system. They have started their epoch-making book “Metaphors We Live By”, in this way: “Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish - a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language.”

Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3). But despite this

general understanding, Lakoff and Johnson declare that “we have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Therefore, Lakoff and Johnson consider metaphor to have fundamental functions beyond its linguistic function which gives metaphor a central role in the human “conceptual” and cognitive system. In addition, they consider culture, environment, and human experience important in forming the metaphor system of any language and society. Lakoff (1992), believes that metaphor is a matter of thought not language; to mean that “... the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another”. As a result, based on such a belief about metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson divide metaphor into categories as “orientational”, “ontological”, and “structural” ones. This approach to metaphor not only made metaphor find a pivotal place in cognitive linguistics, but also led to more attention to the study of metaphor in other fields of humanities, and in several languages across the globe.

Regarding “conceptual mapping” that in the last decades has produced “great insights” in the study of language, scientific discovery, design, mathematical thinking, and computer interfaces, Fauconnier and Turner (2008, p. 53) believe we can rethink the metaphor, since now “we have a richer and deeper understanding of the processes underlying metaphor than we did previously”. They believe that in producing “conceptual metaphors” we have a complicated process of “integration networks” that are culturally produced “over long periods”, and “get transmitted over generations”. These remarks indicate that paying attention to the underlying mental and cultural aspects is important in understanding metaphor. In addition, such studies show that the study of metaphor in the last few decades has increasingly gone beyond providing a definition for it or paying attention merely to its literary and linguistic dimensions, and has led to deeper studies such as the mental aspects involved in its production.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, studying the mental mechanisms involved in the production of metaphor helps to understand the mental mechanisms involved in other dimensions of human mental performance, “... because metaphor itself is one particularly important and salient manifestation of conceptual integration. Double-scope integration, which typically exploits clashes, is the hallmark of cognitively modern human beings. And metaphor is one of its powerful products. One that often drives key aspects of art, science, religion, and technology” (ibid., p. 65).

#### 4. Metaphor in Iran

To review viewpoints produced by Iranians about metaphor, we should refer to the works written by Iranians about rhetoric since one thousand years ago. Raduyani (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this regard, see also Kintsch (2008), and Coulson (2008).

centuries AD), in the famous book of *Tarjumân al-Balâgha*<sup>1</sup> (“Interpretation of Rhetoric”), in the chapter of «في الاستعارة» (“about metaphor”), says “its meaning is borrowing something, and this art is such that there is something in it, with a real name, or a word with a special absolute meaning, then the speaker may borrow that name or that word to use it in another place. And this way of using the name or the word is a new flower in the garden of rhetoric” (Raduyani, 2001, p. 148). In support of his definition of metaphor, Raduyani has provided numerous sample poems. As we will see below, bringing poetic examples is one of the characteristics of old Persian language texts in which «استعارة» “metaphor” is discussed. The interesting point in the definition of Raduyani is “using the name or word in another place” which can be comparable to the concept of “transfer” and in this way brings the definition close to the Aristotelian definition of metaphor.

Rashid al-Din Vatvat (1088-10188 AD), in his *Hada'iq al-Sibr fi Daqa'q al-Shi'r* (“Gardens of Magic in the Subtleties of Poetry”), defines metaphor as “to borrow something”. In explaining this “art”, he says “Every word has an original meaning, then the secretary (["*dabir*"]) or the poet, in the way of borrowing, uses that word in another place based on its original meaning, and this art is common in all languages” (Vatvat, 1960, p. 649). As we see, Vatvat’s definition and explanation are very similar to Raduyani’s definition of metaphor. At the beginning of his book, by mentioning *Tarjumân al-Balâgha*, Vatvat says that her motivation for writing *Hada'iq al-Sibr fi Daqa'q al-Shi'r* is to remove and solve the ugliness, difficulties, and defects of *Tarjumân al-Balâgha* (ibid: 621). Vatvat also says “... and since metaphor is not improbable and is pleasant, it brings perfect beauty for the speech” (Vatvat, 1960, p. 669). He provides examples of the use of metaphor in some verses of the Qur’an, the words of the Prophet of Islam, and in Persian and Arabic prose and poetry to show how this art contributes to the beauty and eloquence of the speech. Therefore, in general, it can be said that for Vatvat metaphor has an ornamental function in language.

Shams Qays Razi (1935, pp. 270-271), in *Al-Mu'jam Fi Maayir Ashari L-Ajam* (“A Treatise on The Prosody and Poetic Art of the Iranians”), considers «استعارت» (“metaphor”) as a kind of “*majaz*” (“metonymy”), to say that “the *majaz* is against the “*haqiqbat*” (“reality”), and *haqiqbat* is a word denoting a meaning which its coiner has originally given to it”. The example

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Âtash, in editing *Tarjumân al-Balâgha*, believes it “... is the first book written at the end of the period of compiling and consolidating the foundations of Iranian literature after Islam”. Then he continues to say that “all the authors of the sources of Iranian literary history have considered this book to be written by Farrukhi” (death 1037/ 8 AD). According to Âtash, Rashid al-Din Vatvat (death 1182/3 AD), “the poet and secretary of Khwarazmshahian, is the last person who saw this book eight hundred years ago” (Raduyani, ibid., p. 21). Therefore, Raduyani may not be the original author of *Tarjumân al-Balâgha*, particularly because he is thoroughly unknown in Persian old texts, and nothing is known about him, saving the name of his father. Âtash also argues that the author of *Tarjumân al-Balâgha* cannot be Farrukhi Sistani (ibid., pp. 42-7).

<sup>2</sup> means “virtual/ not real”

that Shams Qays Razi has provided for *highlight* is «دست به شمشیر برد و فرار کرد» (“he grabbed the sword by his hand and ran away”). Then he continues to define “*majaz*”: “and “*majaz*” is when you ignore the “*haqiqhat*” and apply the word to a meaning which originally did not mean for it, however there is a kind of proximity between the new meaning and the original meaning of the word based of which it is possible to understand the intended meaning of the speaker.” The example Sham Qays Razi provides here for “*majaz*” is: «چنانک گویی فلانک را بر تو» (“like when you happen to say that he does not have a hand («دست» in Persian) on you and has no stable foot («پا» in Persian) in your friendship, to mean that he has no power and blessing over you and will not be stable in your friendship”. Based on the explanations of Shams Qays Razi, here “hand” and “foot” are not used in their primary original meaning, but are used in a secondary meaning to denote “power” and “stability”. In this case, too, there is a kind of proximity between the original and secondary meaning of the words, based on which we can understand the intended meaning of the speaker. Shams Qays Razi then continues to say that “metaphor” is a clear example of “*majaz*”: “Metaphor is the use of a noun about something similar to the original thing that the noun is denoting, such as a brave man when he is called a lion, because of the courage and action that both are known for, and people call the stupid and ignorant a donkey, because of the stupidity both are famous for”. Therefore, according to Shams Qays Razi, metaphor is using a name about someone or something, because of the similarity in some attributes or characteristics between that person or thing and the person or thing that the name is originally used for. In other words, the speaker or writer uses a noun metaphorically about someone or something based on a kind of similarity between them.

In the process of using nouns metaphorically, by the speaker or writer, and its semantic decoding by the listener or reader, they both know that only some attributes and characteristics of the person or thing that the noun is originally used for, transfer to the person or thing that the speaker or writer metaphorically refer to. These implications of Shams Qays Razi’s views about metaphor can be compared to what Searle (1979) – where he speaks of selection in metaphorical uses of words - and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) – through considering “source” and “target” domains in explaining metaphors – have said about metaphor. Another remarkable point in what Shams Qays Razi has stated about metaphor is that “metaphor is common in the poetry and prose of people from all walks of life”. This is an important point since shows for Shams Qays Razi - like Lakoff and Johnson – the use of metaphor is not restricted to literature, but is also common to the daily uses of a language by all groups of its speakers. For Shams Qays Razi, “metaphor adds to the beauty and sweetness of the speech”, and “is the reason for the man’s speech being eloquent and concise”.

Abd-al-Qahir Jurjāni (1009-1078/81AD), the great Iranian grammarian and rhetorician, has written extensively about metaphor. In *Asrār-al-Balāghab* (“Secrets of

Rhetoric”), he believes that «استعاره» (“metaphor”) is a kind of «تَشْبِيه» (“simile”) and a type of «تَمَثِيل» “allegory”, and “simile” is «قياس» (“analogy”) that is based on “something the hearts feel and the minds understand” (Jurjāni al-Nahvi, 1991, p. 20). Accordingly, we can argue that for Jurjāni, “metaphor” is what is termed as “condensed simile” or condensed analogy, in classical views about metaphor. This brings his views, in this field, close to those of Aristotle. Moreover, the emotional and mental aspects of the subject are important in understanding the “analogy” as the base of a simile and its related metaphor. Jurjāni then goes on to say:

اعلم أن «الاستعاره» في الجملة أن يكون للفظ أصل في الوضع اللغوي معروف تدلُّ الشواهد على أنه اختصَّ به حين وُضِعَ، ثم يستعمله الشاعر أو غير الشاعر في غير ذلك الأصل، و ينقله إليه نقلاً غير لازم، فيكون هناك كالعاريَّة. (Jurjāni al-Nahvi, 1991, p. 30)

know that “metaphor” in the sentence is a word with a known [semantic] origin, and pieces of evidence indicate it has been assigned to that meaning when it was coined, then the poet or non-poet uses it with a different meaning and transfers the new meaning to it, a semantic transfer that has not been necessary at the beginning, but is considered a kind of borrowing.

Therefore, for Jurjāni, metaphor is based on semantic transfer. This transfer is unknown – or in his words “unnecessary” - at the beginning. However, gradually, it becomes known to the language speakers, which is why they understand the metaphor and use it in their speech. Regarding this part of Jurjāni’s views about metaphor, we can say that in addition to defining metaphor, he also talked about the mechanism of its spread and acceptance among the language speakers. Jurjāni has categorized metaphors - namely into two main types «الاستعاره

«الاستعاره مفيدة» (“useful metaphor”) and «الاستعاره غير المفيدة» (“non-useful metaphor”) - and has argued their functions, in *Asrār-al-Balāghah*, and also in his other notable book *Dalā'il al-I'jaz* (“Intimations of Inimitability”) which we will not discuss to avoid prolonging the discussion (see Jurjāni al-Nahvi).

Sirāj al-Dīn Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf Ibn Sakkākī Khwārizmī (116-1229 AD) is another famous Iranian classical scholar who has expressed significant views about metaphor. His book *Miftāh al-Olum* (“Key to Knowledge”) is an encyclopedic book on subjects related to literature and language, namely morphology, syntax, and rhetoric. In his discussions on rhetoric, Sakkākī discusses metaphor in detail. He explains that his predecessors have considered metaphor as using a word about something other than the original thing it is coined for. He considers metaphor as a kind of simile; and believes that metaphor is used “... to exaggerate the simile” («لأجل المبالغة في التشبيه») such as saying: “I saw a lion in the bathroom” («رأيت أسد في الحمام») (Sakkākī Khwārizmī, 1987, p. 384). In other words, metaphors are to intensify the meaning expressed in their related simile. This shows that for Sakkākī Khwārizmī what is important in metaphor is meaning. And since in making and understanding metaphor

we compare two animate or inanimate things from a special point of view to signify something, we can say that the making and understanding metaphor is a mental phenomenon.

Among the contemporary Iranian scholars, Tabataba'i (2011, p. 157) believes that metaphor and allegory are not special to poetry, and in prose and everyday language "we use instances of them". He believes that we use metaphor to "evoke inner feelings". He also believes that "the use of similes and metaphors has been and is common among all groups and tribes of humans instinctively. All people have always used and use similes and metaphors in their poetry and prose, and there is no disagreement between them in using or not using similes and metaphors, but in scientific explanation and explaining the nature of this instinctive practice, the scientists of literature differ with each other" (ibid., p. 163). These statements of Tabataba'i also show that he does not consider metaphor to be specific to literary language, and his idea that there is no disagreement between people in using or not using metaphor shows that he knows metaphor to be a part of the natural mechanism of human language. This view brings his views close to the modern views on metaphor in cognitive linguistics. In his discussions on metaphor, Tabataba'i also states a point that is important from the point of view of the history of the studies related to metaphor in Iran and the Islamic world: "The majority of scholars of literature before Sakkāki considered metaphor to be a matter of *alfaz* ("words") and believed that metaphor is nothing but changing the place of words and using a word instead of another, because of semantic similarity of those two words. ... But Sakkāki believed that metaphor is not a matter of *alfaz*, but rather a matter of *ma'āni* ("meanings") and is a special act of the mind" (ibid). Therefore, Tabataba'i knows a special place for Sakkāki Khwārizmī among the previous scholars who have studied metaphor, and based on what we quoted from him about it, we can say that his views on metaphor are closer to those of Sakkāki Khwārizmī.

In recent decades, numerous works have been published or done on metaphor in Iran. These works can be categorized into some groups: first, researchers who present a historical overview of metaphor. For example, Ejei (1990) has had an analytical look at the "nature" of metaphor in the views of Muslim scholars. In the same way, some research has been done on the views of scholars like Jurjāni and Sakkāki Khwārizmī about metaphor (for example, see Sadat Mousavi and Rahimi, 2020; Barati, 2018; Haghju and Iskandari, 2014). Second, translation of works related to metaphor from other languages, for example, in recent years, more than one Persian translation of the book "Metaphors We Live By", and the book "Metaphor: A Practical Introduction" (Kövecses, 2010) has entered the Iranian book market. Third, in the recent two or three decades, numerous research was done, in Iran, based on the views of European researchers about metaphor. For example, Nourian and Musavi (2023) compares "mystical metaphors and rhetorical metaphors according to Hans Blumenberg's notion of Absolute metaphor". However, the works of this category have been mostly carried out in the framework of cognitive linguistics, and in particular, based on the ideas of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. This category also includes master and doctoral theses about metaphor, which has led to numerous more detailed research about metaphor in the

framework of modern scientific theories. For example, Yussefi Rad (2002) is an MA dissertation about the “metaphor of time in Persian” with a “cognitive semantic approach”; Khademsadeh (2014) is a “study of metaphor in Sadra’s philosophy based on Lakoff’s theory”; and Moghimizadeh (2013) is a doctoral thesis about the metaphor in “Islamic Rhetoric” based on David Punter views. In Iran, in recent years, in addition to language and literature, metaphor has been studied not only in other fields of humanities but also in fields such as art and cinema. These studies, mostly based on a cognitive approach, have highlighted the importance of metaphor in language, literature, culture, thought, and human mental mechanisms.

## 5. Conclusion

This research shows that Aristotle’s ideas about metaphor have had a deep impact on the scholars after him until the present time, both in the West and Iran. In reviewing the Western scholars’ views on metaphor, we saw the profound effect of Aristotle’s views on them. However, there are some points in the views of some of them that are similar to those expressed in cognitive linguistics about metaphor. Also, in examining the ideas of Iranian scholars, it was found that the definition they presented for metaphor is close to the Aristotelian definition of the term. However, here too, there are points in the views of some of them that show they were aware of the mental and semantic mechanism of producing and understanding metaphors. These points are similar to the views of cognitive linguists about metaphor. And finally, to answer the research question, it can be said that although the ideas related to metaphor in Iran and the West seem to have had a common origin, the Western scholar’s views in this field are more dynamic and diverse, and in the modern era, influential theories about metaphor have been presented in the West. These theories have provided frameworks for the study of metaphors in different languages around the world. As came above, in the last few decades, in Iran numerous researches have been done about metaphor in the framework of cognitive linguistics.

## References

- Ar-Rázi, Shamsu O-’Dín Muhammad ibn Qays (1935). *Al-Mu’jam Fí Maayir Ashari L-Ajam, A Treatise on The Prosody and Poetic Art of The Iranians* (edited with introduction and indices by Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahab of Qazvin, and Modarris-Razavi) (M. Ramazani, Ed.). Tehran: Khavar Bookseller. (Original work published in Persian)
- Barati, M. (2018). Classification of metaphors from Jurjani’s viewpoint. *Persian Language and Literature*, 2018; 26(84): 7-29. (Original work published in Persian)
- Black, M. (1962). Metaphor. In J Margolis (Ed.), *Philosophy looks at the arts* (pp. 218-235). New York: Temple University Press.
- Carter, R. (2004). *Language and creativity*, London: Rutledge.
- Cohen, J. (1978). Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy. *Critical Inquiry: Special Issue on Metaphor*, 3(1), 3-12.

- Coulson, S. (2008). Metaphor comprehension and the brain. In R. W. Gibbs (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought* (pp. 177-194). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dabirmoghadam, M. (2022). *Theoretical linguistics: Emergence and development of generative linguistics*. Tehran: SAMT. (Original work published in Persian)
- Davidson, D. (1980). What metaphors mean. In P. Platts (Ed.), *Reference, truth and reality* (pp. 238-254). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Ejei, M. A. (1990). An analytical discussion about the nature of metaphor from the viewpoint of Muslim scholars. *Ma'âref*, 8(3), 411-57.
- Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2008). Rethinking Metaphor. In R. W. Gibbs, Jr. (ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 53-66). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haghju, S., & Iskandari, M. (2014). Metaphor in the viewpoint of Jorjani and Sakaki. *Persian Language and Literature*, 22(77), 63–90. (Original work published in Persian)
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed., C. M. I. M. Matthiessen, Rev.). London: Routledge.
- Henle, P. (1958). Metaphor. In P. Henle (Ed.), *Language, thought and culture* (pp. 173–195). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Jakobson, R. (1971). *Studies on child language and aphasia*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Jurjâni al-Nahvi, A. A. I. A. I. M. (1991). *Asrar al-balâghab* (M. M. Shaker, Ed.). Cairo: Matbaat al-Madani. [in Arabic]
- Jurjâni al-Nahvi, A. A. I. A. I. M. (1992). *Dalâ'il al-i'jâz*. Cairo: Matbaat al-Madani. [in Arabic]
- Khademzadeh, V. (2014). *Study of metaphor in Sadra's philosophy based on Lakoff's theory*. Tehran: Tarbiat Modares University. (Original work published in Persian)
- Kintsch, W. (2008). How the mind computes the meaning of metaphor: A simulation based on SLA. In R. W. Gibbs Jr. (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought* (pp. 129–142). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kofman, S. (1993). *Nietzsche and metaphor* (D. Large, Trans.). London: The Athlone Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1992). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. xx–xx). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Moghimizadeh, M. M. (2013). *A comparative review and analysis of metaphor in Islamic rhetoric and metaphor theory based on the translation of a book of Punter* (Doctoral dissertation). Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Tehran. (Original work published in Persian)
- Moore, G. (2020). *Nietzsche, biology and metaphor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1873). On truth and lies in a nonmoral sense. Retrieved from <https://www3.uwsp.edu/conted/Documents/LIFE/On%20Truth%20and%20Lies.pdf>
- Nourian, F., & Musavi, M. (2023). A comparison between mystical metaphors and rhetorical metaphors according to Hans Blumenberg's notion of absolute metaphor. *Literary Text Research*. Advance online publication. Available from 20 May 2023.

- Ortony, A. (1976). Metaphor: A multidimensional problem. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 1–16). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Raduyani, M. O. (2001). *Tarjuman al-balāgha (Interpretation of rhetoric)* (A. Ātash, Ed.; T. H. Sobhāni & I. Hākemī, Trans.). Tehran: Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignities. (Original work published in Persian)
- Richards, I. A. (1965). *The philosophy of rhetoric*. New York: Galaxy Books.
- Sadat Mousavi, S., & Rahimi, M. (2020). What Jurjani doesn't say about the theory of conceptual metaphors. *Koban-nāme-ye Adab-e Pārsi*, 29, 367–384. (Original work published in Persian)
- Sadock, J. M. (1979). Figurative speech and linguistics. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 46–63). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sakkākī Khwārizmī, S. A. D. A. Y. Y. (1987). *Miftah al-'ulum*. Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyya. (Original work published in Arabic)
- Searle, J. (1979). Metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 92–123). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Semino, E., & Steen, G. (2008). Metaphor in literature. In R. W. Gibbs Jr. (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought* (pp. 232–246). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Steinhart, E., & Kitty, E. F. (1994). Metaphor. In R. E. Asher (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics* (Vol. 5, pp. 2452–2450). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Tabataba'ī, M. H. (2011). *The principles of philosophy and the method of realism* (M. Motahhari, Notes & Comments). Tehran: Sadra Publications. (Original work published in Persian)
- Thompson, G. (2014). *Introducing functional grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Vatvat, R. al-D. (1960). *Divan-e Rashid al-Din Vatvat* (S. Nafisi, Ed.) with *Hada'iq al-sibr fi daqa'iq al-shi'r* (A. Eqbal Ashtiani, Ed.). Tehran: Library of Barani. (Original work published in Persian)
- Evans, V., & Green, M. (2006). *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Yussefi Rad, F. (2002). *The study of metaphor of time in Persian: A cognitive semantics approach* (Unpublished master's thesis). Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran. (Original work published in Persian)