Article : ANALYSIS OF METAPHOR : AN INTERACTIONIST VIEW

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Introduction :

A metaphor is an intriguing concept. It is used implicity as well as explicitly at different levels. Basically metaphor is a linguistic device. It is used to compare certain objects, feelings and attitudes with others. It is a figure of speech used to achieve effect via association, comparison and resemblance. A metaphor is a creation;   for   its   creation   requires   genius.

The English word 'metaphor' has its origin in Greek word 'Metaphora' which means 'carry over' or 'to transfer'. As terence Hawkes says in metaphor (1972:1).

'Traditionally, a metaphor is taken to the most fundamental form of figurative language'.

Figurative language is somewhat different but derived from literal language. Figurative language deliberately interferes with the system of literal usages by its assumption that forms literally related to one object can be transferred to another object. The interference takes the form of transference with its aim of achieving new, special or more precise meaning. It means language turns away from literal meaning towards figurative meaning. Hence a metaphor is a figure of speech.

A metaphor can be analysed using different parameters. I.A. Richards analyses metaphor into 'tenor' and 'vehicle'. Interaction between tenor and vehicle is possible only when there is some likeness between them. Hence 'ground' or 'context' of comparison is the third parameter. There are some other parameters which are hacked from the study of different approaches to metaphor such as tenor-vehicle relationship, nature of grammatical device, transfer feature, domain of metaphor and form and function of metaphor. To analyse metaphor one has to go through these parameters. Identification and formalization of parameters is essential   for   getting   meaning   from   metaphor.

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These parameters of metaphor help to understand what a metaphor is, what its constituents are and what its functions are. There are eight different types of parameters of a metaphor from the interactionists point of view.

Parameters of Metaphor :

1. **Tenor** **:**

Tenor is the basic parameter of metaphor since a metaphor is a device of comparison of two things or two ideals, it must have two or more objects or ideas. The meaning of metaphor arises from the interaction of the two lenor is one of these two things or ideas that are compared.

I. A. Richards analyzes metaphor into two elements : tenor and vehicle. According to him tenor is the general drift, the underlying idea which the metaphor expresses.

Tenor is the literal part of the expression with its reconstructed literal context. For example :

In Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde I (as reproduced in Leech. 1969. p. 153) "But ye lovers that bathen in gladness."

Leech analyses the above metaphor its literal and figurative parts, the lines set out below are labeled 'L' (literal) and F (figurative)

L : But ye lovers that ------------- gladnesse.
F : But ye lovers that bathen in gladnesse.

The tenor is the literal part of the expression with its reconstructed literal context. With its interaction to figurative part we get new meaning.

Meaning : "But ye lovers that feel gladness."

Tenor, therefore is the element which is given for being compared with, transformed or defined in terms of the vehicle.

2. **Vehicle:**

Vehicle is the image conveyed by the word actually used. According to Richards vehicle is the basic analogy which is used to embody or carry the tenor. It is the figurative part of the expression. In metaphor tenor and vehicle necessarily co present. Richards further states.

"The co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction".

Leech in his above cited example denotes vehicle by the letter 'F'. The vehicle in the example together with its reconstructed context would read according to Leech (1969. p. 154) as follows.

Ye lovers that (feel) gladness
VEH : ye lovers that |(feel)| gladness |bathen in| (water etc.)

Vehicle is a figurative language but not an 'escape' from the realities of life or of language instead, it is made out of, and it makes those realities.

3. **Tenor Vehicle Relationship :**

Tenor and vehicle are very important parameters of metaphor. They are two separate things but they become involved in a crucial relation in and through the process of metaphorization.

Tenor and vehicle can have three types of links or relations between them according to Taurangeau and Sternberg. This relation is that of anamoly; comparison (or similarity) and interactions.

The anamoly view emphasizes on the dissimilarity of the semantic features of topics (the subject) and vehicles (predicate).

"The similarity or comparison view of tenor vehicle relationship is the traditional approach. According to this approach a metaphor is seen in relating its subject or tenor to something else (in the predicate).

The interactionist relation between tenor and vehicle can be described as follows in Tourangeue and Sternberg Note 1 1981.

"The interactionist view differs somewhat from both the preceding positions in so far as it emphasizes both similarity and dissimilarity of the topic and vehicle as means to highlight analogous or parallel attributes. Tenor vehicle relationship throws light on mainly interactive function of metaphor, its form and its integrity, its role and order.

4.   Ground   :

This is a ground of comparison between the tenor and the vehicle. The ground of metaphor is stated by finding the similarity discerned between the objects.

Leech states "the ground of metaphor is more clearly seen once we have isolated tenor and vehicles".

The point of contact between tenor and vehicle is designated as ground. It is called as a semantic adhesive binding tenor and vehicle together in metaphor.

In example quoted previously – But ye lovers that bathen in gladnesses the ground of metaphor has been stated as follows.

"The lovers attitude to gladness is that they whole heartedly commit themselves to it. Gladness becomes their element – they see nothing beyond it. Their delight is simple, uncomplicated, untarnished by worry, like that of a person enjoying the water – the natural gift of god". (Ibid p. 155).

In the expression, "ye lovers that bathan in gladness" when tenor and vehicle is isolated 'bathan in remains as the ground. It is the actual link with 'gladness' syntactically on the one hand and on the other hand it links with 'water' semantically. It therefore forms a link binding (tenor) 'gladness' and (vehicle) 'water'. The link with the tenor is syntactic but that with the vehicle is semantic. Thus the function of 'ground' is linking tenor and vehicle in construction and

meaning.

5.   Nature   of   Grammatical   Device   :

Metaphors are introduced by making use of a variety of grammatical structures. Such as, the copula structure, the genitive structure etc. Though it is difficult to find a clear semantic counterpart to every grammatical device, grammatical structure does influence meaning.

Leech (1981, p. 183) has given 'some rather direct correspondences between syntactic constituents and semantic elements such as arguments and predicates. Following are some of these interconnections.

Syntactic		↔		Semantic
Noun	phrase	↔		Argument
Verb	phrase	↔		Predicate
Adjective	phrase	↔	One	place	predicate
Prepositional	phrase	↔	Down	graded	predication
Relative	Clause	↔	Down	graded qualifying predication etc.

In the above table Leech has given what may be described as semantic function of syntactic elements. The grammatical device is the statement of the syntactic environment in which metaphor occur.

6.   Transfer   Feature   :

Transfer feature is one of the parameters of metaphor. A metaphor is metaphor because it transfers meaning feature from one term to anther, from vehicle to tenor to be precise. It transfers meaning feature from metaphorical to the literal term.

Tenor and vehicle are ideas, they have semantic features.

For example :- the semantic features of the stone would be : "Object, Physical, Natural, Non-Living etc." (Samuel Levin. 1977 p. 41) Similarly the word bachelor would have the following semantic features : Unmarried, Animate, Male etc.

Under the influence of the metaphorical process one such feature is imparted or transferred by the vehicle to the tenor.

Terence Hawkes reproduces the example from Arnold. (Ibid. p. 61.)

Yes : in the sea of life enisl'd

'sea of life' is a metaphorical expression. 'Life' is 'tenor', 'Sea' is 'vehicle'. Life is compared to sea. As metaphor is a semantic transfer, the vehicle 'Sea' transfers one of its features 'expanse', for instance to indicate the vastness of life.

The feature that is transferred is a unit of conceptual meaning and it is connotative rather than denotative meaning. Transfer feature may be public, private or universal. For example 'dove'. When it is universal we have public symbolism it symbolizes peace.

The semantic transfer has different functions, such as to change domains, to extend meaning by filing in lexical gaps; to attribute traits (animate inanimate); to reconstruct another context; transportation from a context; and a creation of a new context.

7.   Domain   :

Domain is another parameter of metaphor According to Christine Brooke-Rose all metaphors are taken from somewhere. They seem to, be taken from some domain   or   the   other.

The term domain is used in relation to the domain of thought i.e. from which the metaphors are borrowed that is from myth, romance, alchemy, nature etc. It is also used in the sense of realm or aspects of life. All the different phenomena that constitute human experience are capable of orderly clarification into divisions and sub-divisions. Any such systematic organization of facts or phenomena into a class on the basis of a perceived resemblance in the conceptual attributes they posses would   constitute   a   domain   or   aspect   of   life.

She says, 'sense domain' Christine-Brooke-Rose doman. 'An offshoot of the classification by domain of thought is that by the sense with which the metaphor is apprehended   –   that   is   according   to   sense   domains.

The domain to which the vehicle belongs is important Domain is the domain of the vehicle. The function of the vehicle is to change the tenor which itself belongs to a particular domain. Owing to the action of metaphor the tenor, through the vehicle   becomes   absorbed   into   the   domain   of   the   vehicle.

In the example taken previously 'sea of life', the vehicle 'sea' belongs to the domain of nature. Therefore tenor life through the vehicle is worked into the domain of nature become vast, expansive, deep, unfathomable as the sea, a natural phenomena.   Sea   belongs   to   the   domain   of   nature.

Meaning in metaphor is to be explained in terms of its domain linkage function. It must arise as a function of the domain indicated by the vehicle.

8.   Form   and   Function   :

Form and function are the parameters have been discovered for formalization. A   metaphor   may   be   function   based   or   form-based   or   both.

Form is physical form with its properties of size, shape, mass, etc. Following is the example of metaphor based on similarity of form. It is from the Kolhapur corpus.   K5,   Text   25,   13,   line   0890   :

1. A thin dyspectic with a cast thread snaking across his chest he began with a nasal   chant   to   Shiva.

The metaphor illustrates similarity to forms. The cast thread with its anything

but straight course across the wearer's chest would resemble a serpant.

2. In the shade the kittens were asleep curled into doughnuts. (L 5, text 23, page, 64 line 1000)

The form of the vehicle is transferred to the tenor or the ground of comparison is the form between tenor and vehicle. Form become a meaning component in expression.

Metaphor may be function based also. Here the function of the vehicle is transferred to the tenor.

For example : (K. 5, Text 23, Page 7, Line 0190)

But even though the flod did not enter this village, it nibbled at the high ridge and once in a while gobbled up a chunk of the grass land stretching along the bank, expanded and looked alien and began hissing.

Here nibbling (rat), gobbling (animal) hissing (snake) are function transferred to the tenor.

Functions of attributes can also be transferred. In the given example 'movement' is a quality and also 'expanding'. Functions of moving and expanding are transferred.

For analyzing the metaphor one has to go through these parameters Identification and formalization of parameters is essential for getting meaning from metaphor.

CONCLUSION :

The concept of metaphor has been evolving through the ages. Each age has contributed its own idea to metaphor. Metaphor is a linguistic device. Historically it is an ornament of style. The meaning of metaphor changes as per its reference to the time context and as per its perception by the reader. It is a great skill to identify and formalize the metaphor. The parameters of metaphor discussed here certainly help to get the meaning metaphor.

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