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Iconic Note as Principle of Motivation in Tonni Morrison's Sula

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Research Highlights

The current study proposes to give an insight about iconic note as a concept of motivation in literary language applied on one of the prominent novels in African- American literature which is Morrison's *Sula*. Iconic property is considered as one of the prominent principles in motivation of language in which there is a similarity between form and concept. The study of the iconic note in literary works has become significant after the emergence of modernist in arts and literature whereas prior to that, Iconic note as a source of motivation was considered as salient characteristic of primitive language and poetic language only. The problem of the study will explain how Morrison's text constructed to decline from the concept of arbitrariness and to meet the concept of motivation. By achieving the objective of the research, the study will focus on two important tropes which are metaphor and metonymy and how they co-occur in literary text to serve as ingredients of iconic perspective of motivated language. After taking a journey in the analysis of Morrison's *Sula*, the research will come up with some recommendations for further studies.

Research Objectives

The study aims to scrutinize the concept of motivation in one of Morrison's novels which is *Sula*. The research exploits two very processes in figurative language which are metaphor and metonymy. Morrison's text is full of metaphors which lead her readers to get a deep insight about African- American community under the hammer of racism. Morrison's text is full of metaphors which lead her readers to get a deep insight about African- American community under the hammer of racism. The purpose of selecting Morrison's *Sula* because all her literary product guide her readers to explore a patent image of African-American through metaphorical jungle (Roginey, 1991). Metaphors do not come into being haphazardly; however, they are bound to social setting and constrains. Also, they are presented via metonymic relations to contextualize them. Morrison's text is a fertile source to meet with the requirement of solving the research problem because the construction of her works renders a jungle of metaphorical expressions which challenges the process of interpretation. Thus, using metaphor and metonymy in literary text is very significant because they function together giving a motivating language and clear insight about the culture. That might create a text with iconic note.





Methodology

Literary texts can gain iconic note because it consists two common rhetorical figures namely metaphor and metonymy, which are two common linguistic processes used in non- literary and literary texts in which speakers or writers address things in terms of substitution and association respectively. Metaphor is a process in language used to make comparison between two things; in a broader sense, a speaker tries to address something indirectly by referring to dissimilar thing. Metaphor is another linguistic process used to make a comparisons between the attributes of one thing/ person and something else (Thornborrow & Shan, 1998). The reason behind using metaphor is to create an effect on the reader by transferring attributes from a thing to another being addressed. That might create similarity consideration at which the level of the interpretation of metaphoric objects exemplify iconic interpretation. Hiraga's model of the interplay of metaphor and iconicity. Hiraga (2003) states in cognitive and semiotic terms icons and metaphors share a common property of signification which is motivation by similarity because iconic and metaphoric forms are presented with motivated nature. In cognitive terms, icons concern mapping between form and meaning in various degree of abstractness while metaphor concerning mapping between two conceptual meaning different domains from a less abstracted (source) onto more abstracted (target). Thus, the link between icon and metaphor can create cohesion and explication of various linguistic phenomena (Lakoff & Turner, 1989).

Results

Motivation is a principle in arts in which the relationship between form and concept or form with another form is naturalized. Johnson & Lakoff theorize that cultural and religious values are in nature metaphorical and the characterization of culture and religion is achieved when symbolic metonymy link them with every day experience (2003: 41). In Morrison's *Sula*, the abundant use of metaphoric expressions and metaphors within metonymy that could serve as a source of motivation leading to iconic perspective.

The following extract explicates Hannah's dream symbols presented metaphorically "She dreamt of a wedding in a red bridal gown_ until Sula came in and work her" (p. 71). The quote shows the symbol of wedding and the red gown as metaphorical expressions foreshadowing something catastrophic will happen to Sula's sister Hannah. That terrific





events is manifested in the following extract by which gives an image metaphorically about Hannah's death:

She rolled up the window and it was then she saw Hannah burning. The flames from the yard fire were licking the blue dress, making her dance ... cut and bleeding she clawed the air trying to aim her body toward the flaming, dancing figure (p.76).

The verbs licking, clawing and make her dancing are exploited metaphorically in order to activate readers' memory and give an image about how agonizing death Hannah faced. Furthermore, Morrison tries to create series of images in mind of readers. These images are summoned up from various semiotic system. These images create mapping in the mind of the readers creates iconic perspective to her literary text because according to Hiraga (2003) metaphor and iconicity are interrelated.

Findings

Thus, the concept of motivation has become very important principle in language which adopts the notion that words or linguistic elements may give mental picture about things to which they refer. Such connections can be achieved when language is utilized as a semiotic system rather than communicational system. That can be manifested through two linguistic processes which are metaphor and metonymy. These processes cannot occur randomly but they are bound by cultural archetypal and historical frames. Furthermore, iconic note can be a prime results of motivating text because both iconic expressions and metaphors depend on mapping between source and target domains.

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