

## *Tanulmány*

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### **The pragmatic implications of metonymical body-based idioms in Jordanian Arabic**

#### **Abstract**

We report a study of the metonymical idioms that incorporate body parts, exploring the role that body parts have in motivating different aspects of metonymical meaning in Jordanian Arabic. The study discusses a number of metonymy-based idioms that include lexis for parts of the body, showing that such idioms underlie and help structure our understanding of concepts and experiences in the world. The conceptual “intra-domain” mapping examined in this study underlies Jordanian people’s use and understanding of conventional idioms such as *red-haired*, *blue-eyed*, *long-necked*, *strong-backed*, *broken-backed*, *thin-skinned*, *long-handed*, etc. The paper demonstrates how rich the human body is in terms of being a source domain for metonymies. Also, all the conventional idioms reported in this study are to be viewed as clear-cut examples of metonymies, as used in Jordanian Arabic.

*Keywords:* idioms, metonymies, implicatures, explicatures, mapping, body parts.

#### **1 Introduction**

As outlined above, this study investigates the conventional idioms that include words for parts of the body used to stand metonymically for human states, behaviour and actions. In agreement with Gibbs & Wilson (2002: 524), we contend that because body parts are familiar to and well-understood by people, they are extended metonymically as a way to understand ideas, events, and objects in this world. That is, metonymies based on body parts provide a good resource to understand human states, behaviour and actions in terms of what is familiar and well-understood.

In order to examine the pragmatic implicatures of the conventional metonymy-based idioms, there was a need to collect idioms that include lexis for parts of body being extended metonymically. To achieve this, we collected all the most common and frequently used conventional idioms that all Jordanian native speakers are assumed to know and use based on our experience as educated native speakers of Jordanian. In addition, we asked our students in eight classes to write down all idioms that include parts of the body and are employed in the Jordanian context, besides the pragmatic meaning of each idiom. It should be made clear that the motive behind getting students involved in data collection was not to check whether or not the pragmatic implicatures they hold about the metonymical idioms in question are similar to or different from ours, but whether there were idioms that were not reported by the authors

during the process of data collection. Because the triangulation of different methods and cross-checking one result against another increase the reliability of the results (Hansen 2005), and to ensure the cultural homogeneity in terms of understanding the pragmatic implicatures of the metonymical idioms in place, we informally asked many elderly people (relatives, friends, and acquaintances) – who are assumed to be more experienced than university undergraduate students – about the metonymically extended meanings of body-based idioms. It was found that the informal answers collected from both groups (students and elderly people) were identical. Because the body-based metonymies (upon which idioms are based) examined in this study are not instances of ambiguous metonymies, it is not significant to include in this study the contextualized body-based idioms. Decontextualized body-based idioms are likely to provide a good understanding of the metonymically extended meanings of body parts, in that they constitute an essential part of the established and conventional inventory of idioms that all Jordanian people are assumed to be familiar with.

Section 2 will provide a brief review on metonymy and metaphor, showing the difference between these two tropes. In this section, we will also provide a review on Arabic metonymies, explaining and analyzing their three major categories. Also, a sub-section is allocated to explain the different approaches proposed to define what idioms are. Finally, we end the discussion outlining the difference between implicatures and explicatures, showing whether the pragmatic implications of idioms are derived via implicatures or explicatures. Section 3 comprises the main contribution of this study, in that a discussion of the pragmatic implications of metonymical idioms involving *head*, *face*, *eye*, *hand*, *tongue*, and some other body parts is included. Occasional but unsystematic examples of body-based idioms existing in English are also discussed. Section 4 presents the conclusion of the study summarizing its main findings.

## **2 Theoretical background**

Metonymy, as a common rhetorical mode of discourse, has been extensively researched in connection with metaphor with the aim of highlighting its pragmatic function. In this section, we begin by defining both tropes (metonymy and metaphor), showing that though both figures involve substitution of one term for another, metonymy could be contrasted with metaphor. Because idioms, as an area of language, could be based on metaphor, metonymy or conventional knowledge, then a discussion on the nature of metonymy-based idioms should be provided. As this study is concerned with examining the pragmatic implications of metonymical idioms of the body parts, it is of particular importance to demonstrate whether the meanings of metonymy-based idioms are derived via explicatures or implicatures. We end this section providing a detailed account of Arabic metonymy, investigating its linguistic and rhetorical meanings and analyzing its major categories.

### **2.1 Metonymies and metaphors**

As mentioned at the outset, metonymy has been a subject of study by a number of researchers (Panther & Radden 1999; Barcelona 2000a, 2000b; Dirven & Pörings 2003; Ruiz de Mendoza & Otal Campo 2002) who aim to explain its conceptual nature. Cognitive approaches to metonymy argue that metonymy, like metaphor, is conceptual in nature. Lakoff and Johnson

(1980, 2003: 39), for instance, contend that “metonymic concepts structure not just our language but our thoughts, attitudes, and actions”. Seen as conceptual processes, metaphor and metonymy are further defined by Lakoff (1987: 288) and the definitions are quoted as follows:

- (i) “... metaphoric mapping involves a source domain and a target domain. ... The mapping is typically partial. It maps the structure in the source domain onto a corresponding structure in the target domain”
- (ii) “... a metonymic mapping occurs within a single conceptual domain which is structured by an ICM (= an Idealized Cognitive Model).”

Ullmann (1962: 212), as a representative of the classical approach to metaphor and metonymy, draws a distinction between metonymy and metaphor, showing that the former involves contiguity whereas the latter is based on similarity. By contiguity, Ullmann means the associative relations that are not based on similarity. In the same vein, Halliday’s (1985: 319-320) definitions of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche (as a subtype of metonymy) stress the same notion that metaphor is based on resemblance whereas metonymy is based on associations. Halliday’s definitions can be quoted as follows:

- (i) *Metaphor*. “A word is used for something resembling that which it usually refers to; for example, *flood ... poured in, ... in A flood of protests poured in following the announcement ( a large quantity ... came in)*. ... If the fact of resemblance is explicitly signaled by a word such as *like*, as in *protests came in like a flood*, this is considered to be not metaphor, but simile.”
- (ii) *Metonymy*. “A word is used for some thing related to that which it usually refers to; for example *eye ... in keep your eye on the ball (gaze)*.”
- (iii) *Synecdoche*. “A word is used for some larger whole of which that which it refers to is a part; for example *strings ... in At this point the strings take over (stringed instruments)*.”

All the definitions mentioned above demonstrate that there is conceptual mapping in both metaphor and metonymy, with the difference that metaphor is cross-domain mapping whereas metonymy is a mapping within a single conceptual domain (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 103) or intradomain phenomenon in Deignan’s (2005: 73) terms, though Radden (2003: 407) assumes that the distinction between metaphor and metonymy is notoriously difficult, in that metonymy and metaphor “[...] are assumed to form a continuum with fuzzy cases between these categories. The conceptual domain is thus important in defining metaphor and metonymy (Radden 2003: 408) and in relation to this, Langacker (1991: 547) defines the conceptual domain as “[a]ny coherent area of conceptualization relative to which semantic structures can be characterized (including any kind of experience, concept or knowledge system)”. Kövecses (2010) and others use the terms *vehicle entity* and *target entity* to analyze metonymy. The vehicle entity is defined as the word or the phrase which is used metonymically, whereas the target entity is the intended meaning of the referent. In this case, *hands*, *the crown*, and *wheels* are vehicle entities whose intended meanings or referents (target entities) are *workers*, *the monarchy*, and *vehicle*.

Gibbs (1994: 320) further defines metonymy as “an aspect of something to represent or stand for the thing as a whole”. Gibbs proposes ‘is like’ test to distinguish metaphor from metonymy. If one thing can be said to be like another, then it is a metaphor. If it would be nonsensical to say this, then it is a metonymy. To explain this, Gibbs provides the following examples as used in the American English contexts:

1. **The cream puff** was knocked out in the first round of the fight. (metaphor)
2. We need a new **glove** to play the third base. (metonymy)

The only meaningful comparison is metaphor, in that it is meaningful to say that ‘the boxer is like a creampuff’ but would be nonsensical to say ‘the third baseman is like glove.’ Building on Kövecses and Radden’s (1998: 39) general definition of conceptual metonymy, Barcelona (2003a, 2003b) uses a broad definition of metonymy which captures the necessary and sufficient conditions for metonymicity, and he calls it the *schematic* definition of metonymy:

A metonymy is a mapping of a cognitive domain, the source, onto another domain, the target. Source and target are in the same functional domain and are linked by a pragmatic function, so that the target is mentally activated. (Barcelona 2003a: 246)

Barcelona (2003b: 84) asserts that viewing metonymy as a type of mapping is more adequate than seeing it as a “stand for” relationship, since “the source does not necessarily substitute unambiguously for the target: it merely activates it from a given perspective”. By way of illustrating metonymy, Barcelona (2003b: 84) uses the example of *Picasso is not easy to appreciate*, where *Picasso’s artistic work* is a metonymic target and *Picasso* is the source domain, and the hearer is expected to conceptualize that this artistic work is the outcome of Picasso’s artistic genius. Barcelona (2003b: 84), in agreement with Fauconnier (1997: 11) who regards metonymy as a pragmatic function mapping, contends that in metonymy “the source maps onto and activates the target in virtue of the experiential (hence pragmatic) link between the roles each of them performs in the same “functional domain”.

Panther and Thornburg (2003: 2) contest the view that metonymy should be regarded as a referential phenomenon where the name of referent is used to stand for another referent. They contend that the substitution view of metonymy is inadequate, as the source of a metonymy is not simply replaced by the metonymic target, except in cases involving historical semantic change. Panther and Thornburg (2003: 2), instead, maintain that metonymy, in line with the cognitive linguists’ view of metonymy, is better viewed as a cognitive trigger providing access to a targeted concept. Building on Lakoff’s (1987) and Langacker’s (1993) works, which highlight the conceptual nature of metonymy, Radden and Kövecses (1999: 21) propose that “metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle [also often called the ‘source’, KUP/LIT], provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same cognitive model.”

## 2.2 *Metonymies in Arabic*

As explained, metonymy is a common mode of discourse in Arabic. In Arabic, metonymy is different from hypallage, which is in turn equivalent to the English metonymy and its relations such as part-to-whole, whole-to-part, and container-content. Though Arabic metonymies and hypallages are dealt with as distinct tropes, they are mapping within a single domain and are based on the “stand for” relationship. In Arabic rhetoric, metonymy is assumed to be semantically disambiguous and a considerable amount of text processing effort on the part of the addressee to discern the intended underlying signification of metonymy should be avoided. Abdul-Raof (2006: 235-237) explains the three categories of metonymy used in Arabic language, namely, metonymy of an attribute, metonymy of a modified, and metonymy of an affinity.

Metonymy of an attribute, also referred to as metalepsis, refers to a characteristic trait such as generosity, courage, and beauty. Thus in *Zaid's carpet is dust*, the expression *his carpet is dust* stands for poverty. Also, in *Ali's hand is clean*, the expression *clean hand* is a metonymy for the attribute of trustworthiness. In *Ahmad has got lots of ashes*, the metonymy is represented by the expression *lots of ashes* which stands for Ahmad's generosity. This is because many guests visit him daily, and are fed generously. Because cooking needs wood to be burned, fire leaves ashes behind, and for this reason, “lots of ashes” is taken to be indicative of generosity in this particular context.

In metonymy of a modified, the modifier and the affinity are mentioned but the modified is ellipted. Thus in *I killed the king of beasts*, the metonymy expression is *the king of beasts*, which stands for the lion. Abdul-Raof (2006: 237) explains that both metonymy of an attribute and metonymy of a modified are subsumed under the rhetorical feature of periphrasis, in which the communicator uses more expressions to express a given idea instead of using a single lexeme. Periphrasis, he claims, is used in modifications and euphemistic expressions. So, *the ship of desert* is a metonymy of a modified referring to ‘the camel’, and in *our troops made a tactical withdrawal in the southern sector of the battlefield*, *tactical withdrawal* is a euphemistic expression used as a metonymy and the pragmatic motivation of that is to avoid face loss caused by the mentioning of the words *defeat* or *retreat*.

As for the metonymy of an affinity, the modifier and the modified are maintained but the affinity word is ellipted. So, in *Generosity is between Ahmad's two garments*, the characteristic attribute meant is *generous*, yet the communicator has chosen to mention the nominalized attribute generosity which refers allegorically, through metonymy, to the modified noun Ahmad. Reviewing the categories of Arabic metonymy, we found that the most relevant to the present study is the metonymy of an attribute. In what follows, we discuss the two approaches proposed to define idioms.

## 2.3 *Idioms*

In an attempt to define idioms, Kövecses (2010: 231) explains two different points of view: the traditional view of idioms and the cognitive linguistic view of idioms. In the traditional view, idioms are assumed to be a matter of language alone independent of any conceptual system, whereas in the cognitive linguistic view, idioms are regarded as the products of our conceptual system and not simply a matter of language. According to Kövecses (2010), the meaning of an idiom springs from our more general knowledge of the world embodied in our

conceptual system. This means that the overall meaning of an idiom is motivated by our general knowledge of the world. Kövecses (2010: 234) proposes that the motivation of idioms arises from knowledge of cognitive mechanisms (metaphor, metonymy, and conventional knowledge).

Attempting to explain idioms based on metaphor, Kövecses (2010) uses the example of *spit fire* where the domain of fire is used to understand the domain of anger. In this case, anger is comprehended via the ANGER IS FIRE conceptual metaphor. Because conceptual metaphor is not the only cognitive mechanism that can motivate idioms, Kövecses goes on to explain idioms based on conventional knowledge and metonymy. For this purpose, he collects a large number of idioms relevant to the human hand from a variety of sources. By conventional knowledge as a cognitive mechanism, Kövecses means the shared knowledge that people in a given culture have concerning a conceptual domain like the human hand. They have the shared knowledge and standard information about the parts, shape, size, use, and function of the human hand. The meaning of the idiomatic expression of *have one's hands full* is to be busy. If someone holds things in the hand, one cannot easily pick up other things with it and use the hand for another activity. Kövecses says that this is not the only explanation for this idiom, yet it is the conventional (neither metaphoric nor metonymic) knowledge that motivates this idiom. As for metonymy-based idioms, Kövecses uses the example of *hold one's hand* meaning 'wait and see'. This meaning arises as a result of the metonymy THE HAND STANDS FOR THE ACTIVITY which seems to be the basis for THE HAND STANDS FOR THE PERSON.

In Jordanian Arabic, the meanings of many idioms involving parts of the body largely depend on the metonymical conceptual system. This study, therefore, is confined to explore the pragmatic implications of conventional metonymy-based idioms involving human body parts, as used by people in Jordanian culture. As for the conventionality of metonymies, Deignan (2005) shows that metonymies can be divided into conventional and nonconventional. Nonconventional metonymies are said to be not established meanings, and they can be understood by reference to context. So, in Nunberg's (1979: 149) example of "*The ham sandwich is sitting at table 20*", *ham sandwich* is used as an instance of non-conventional metonymy, in that it can be understood only with reference to context. As an example of conventional metonymy, Deignan (2005: 74) uses the verb *shelve* meaning to postpone plans indefinitely or cancel them.

In a study of fixed expressions and idioms in English, Moon (1998) explains instances of words for parts of the body and clothing used to refer metonymically to human states, behaviour and actions. So, *be long in the tooth*, *have one's eye on something*, *cap in hand*, and *hold on to someone's apron strings* are all instances of clear-cut and conventional metonymies. Deignan and Potter (2004) and Moon (1998), conducting corpus-based studies, propose that many linguistic expressions from the source domain of the bodily sensations, processes, and actions can be comprehended as either literal or as figurative. However, all the examples discussed in this paper, though translated literally into English, are to be understood as figurative only.

Many researchers maintain that many aspects of metaphorical thought and language spring from human embodiment (Gibbs 1994; Gibbs & Berg 1999; Gibbs et al. 2004; Kövecses 2000; Lakoff & Johnson 1999). Likewise, Gibbs & Wilson (2002: 525) indicate that "many conceptual metaphors have source domains that are rooted in pervasive patterns of bodily experience." It is, they claim, this embodied, conceptual mapping that motivates people's use

and understanding of conventional expressions such as “*We are just starting off our marriage*”, and: “*I am at the crossroad in my career*” (Quoted from Lakoff & Johnson 1980 by Gibbs & Wilson 2002: 525). In support of this, we contend that many conceptual metonymies (like those discussed in this study) arise from bodily experience.

#### **2.4 Implicatures or explicatures**

In modern pragmatics (e.g. Neo-Gricean Pragmatics and Relevance Theory), understanding an utterance is subject to the addressee’s ability to draw inferences. That is, to detect what the speaker pragmatically implies on the basis of what is literally said (Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez Hernández. 2003: 23). Such implications are known as implicatures in Gricean and Neo-Gricean Pragmatics; meanings that are derived, but not part of, what is said. In Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1995), a distinction is made between implicature derivation and pragmatic derivation. Explicatures are defined as assumptions that are derived in part by inference and in part by decoding. Sperber and Wilson (1995), Carston (1988) and Blakemore (1992), similarly, observe that if *enrichment* of proposition is likely to disambiguate the proposition, then the pragmatic implication involved is explicature rather than implicature. In the *park is some distance from where I live* (Carston 1988 in Davies 1991: 39), *some distance* is vague, but has to be enriched to mean *further away*. Carston notes that richer explicated proposition entails what is literally said.

Along these lines, Blakemore (1992: 58) makes the point that in order to work out the implicature, the hearer needs to supply implicit information that allows him/her to calculate the speaker’s intended meaning. She provides the following example to illustrate this point:

- A: Did you enjoy your holiday?  
 B: The beaches were crowded and the hotel was full of bugs.

Blakemore adds that in order for B’s response to be relevant, A needs to have access to the implicit assumption that one’s comfort might be affected by insects and an excess of people. This information is an implicature because its proposition functions independently of the explicated information (Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez Hernández 2003: 25). In support of Relevance Theory and Gricean and Neo-Gricean Pragmatics, the meanings of metonymic idioms discussed in this paper should not be regarded as being part of what is said or explicated, but as being derived via implicature. In what follows, we discuss the pragmatic implicatures of metonymical idioms that involve the body parts as used in Jordanian Arabic.

### **3 Discussion**

Metonymical body-based idioms could implicate positive or negative meanings. The discussion centers on the body parts that enhance many metonymical idioms, including *head, face, eye, hand, and tongue* – though we allocate a special section to discuss the remaining body parts such as *hair, nose, mouth, teeth, neck, back, skin, blood, and leg* that motivate few, albeit common, idioms.

### 3.1 Head

Head provides an essential source domain for characterizing people human states and behaviour. The implicit meanings of head-based idioms are predominantly negative. This being the case, *someone's head getting big* (rasuh bikbar<sup>1</sup>) – which is equivalent to the English *swollen-headed* – is used rhetorically as a metonymy to stand for someone who is arrogant, whereas *someone with a big head* (rasuh kpeer) refers metonymically to any knowledgeable person (scientist, engineer or professor) who is most appreciated by others, or to any person in power (minister, prime minister, or university president) who has mastery over issues others do not. *Someone with a heavy head* (rasuh θageel), which is equivalent to the English *sleepy head*, symbolizes a person who is less likely to wake up early and almost misses the clock alarm. Other idioms which also implicate negative meanings include *someone's got dry or solid head* (rasuh najif/rasuh gasi), which is a metonymy for the attribute of stubbornness and which is parallel to the English *hard-headed*, and *someone's head and pillow* (rasuh wilmaxaddeh), which symbolizes loneliness (unmarried or friendless person) and metonymically stands for anybody who need not look after anyone except him/herself. When *someone constructed roads in my head* (fatah jawaref fi rasi) – which is equivalent to the English *drilling a hole in someone's head* – is said by someone, then the speaker is complaining that he/she is tormented by someone pertinacious, one who is persistently nagging and over-enquiring about something in a very unpleasant manner

It is worth noting that Arabic and English exhibit similarities and dissimilarities in terms of the pragmatic implications of some shared head-based idioms that could be used in both cultures. Having said that, *off the top of someone's head* (dʒawab min rasuh) is used in Arabic and English to stand for someone whose answer to a question or comment on a topic is not based on precise knowledge and careful thought or investigation. Also, the Arabic *beat your head against the wall* (xalleeh yð<sup>o</sup>rub rasuh filheit<sup>o</sup>) and the English *bang (or knock) your head against the brick wall* symbolize one shared meaning. In Arabic, this idiom stands for a person who, following intensive justifications, explanations, or apologies from the other party, is still displeased and unsatisfied. The Arabic idiom also corresponds to the English one, in that it also stands for someone who wastes time trying a completely hopeless and hard-to-accomplish issue. It refers to a person doggedly attempting the impossible and having his/her efforts repeatedly and painfully rebuffed (Siefing 2004). Other idioms that could be approximately similar in form, but communicating different meanings include the Arabic *put something into his/her head* (ħat<sup>o</sup>t<sup>o</sup> elmawð<sup>o</sup>uſ fi rasuh) and the English *put something into someone's head* where the former stands for the firm intention to fulfil something, and the latter symbolizes suggesting something to someone. The Arabic *put something into someone else's head* (ħat<sup>o</sup>t<sup>o</sup>ha fi ras flan) could also stand for escaping blame and responsibility for wrongdoing and instead shifting the blame and accusing someone else for committing that offence.

In Arabic, *Putting one's head into another's head* (ħat<sup>o</sup> rasuh fi ras flan) metonymically stands for someone who adopts a negative line of behaviour influenced by another and this idiom is said to justify why someone who has been known to always act gently starts, unexpectedly and due to companionship and peership of badly reputed person, acting

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1 See appendix for phonetic symbols.



impolitely in a way that goes against his/her self interests. However, *never set your head against someone's head* (la thut<sup>ʕ</sup> rasak fi ras flan) is said to advise someone who is less powerful not to be opponent of someone else who is more powerful, and this is because of the high potential of being harmed. *From under someone's head = because of someone's head* (min tiht ras flan) is rhetorically used as a metonymy expression to explain that the hardship, problem or crisis the speaker is facing is mainly caused by someone else's doing.

### 3.2 Face

Metonymic idioms that incorporate face are common in Jordanian Arabic, and the conventional pragmatic implications of them could also be either positive or negative. Instances of metonymic face-based idioms of negative implications which are of frequent use include *someone has been eating my face*, *someone should not be given face*, *someone with a bloodless face*, *someone slept on his/her face = someone slept on belly*, and *someone's face stops the livelihood*. *Someone has been eating my face* (akal widʒhi) is a metonymic expression used to stand for someone who relentlessly asks about something and insists on his request. This idiom is also used to stand for creditors who insist on their request and seek to recover debt from debtors. In North American English, the informal *get out of someone's face* could be equivalent to the Arabic *someone has been eating my face*, in that it stands for the request of stopping harassing or annoying someone. *Someone should not be given face* (ma binʕata<sup>ʕ</sup> widʒih) is also a metonymy for a meddling person and this idiom is used as advice not to establish a relationship with any such type of people. There are some people who are intrusive overbearing in a very intolerable way, and if someone shows them a good welcome and smile in their faces once, they are encouraged to come back and hope to get more and more, and ask someone at every opportunity to give them what they want. If someone forgives and disregards an intrusive person's mistakes, then the apologizer might go too far and keep insulting and hurting the apologizee unless the apologizer is stopped from doing so. Further, there are some disturbing people who overstay their welcomes, in that if respected and welcomed in someone's home or workplace, they come to visit someone everyday in order for the host to undertake the duty of hospitality. For all these possible reasons, some people might use the metonymical idiom of *someone should not be given face*.

*Someone with a bloodless face* (widʒhuh ma feeh dam) is a metonymic expression that symbolizes rude and shameless people who are likely to speak in a way that may be hurtful and offensive to others; people who do not care whether they are right or not due to over-brazenness and lack of modesty and understanding. The metonymical idiom of *someone slept on his/her face* (nam ʕala widʒhuh) is normally used to describe someone who slept worried or slept because of the severity of fatigue. Finally, the expression *someone's face stops the livelihood* (widʒhuh bigtt<sup>ʕ</sup>aʕ irrisig) is used to describe pessimistic people who are likely to get someone down. It is normally said when someone failed to fulfill something following running into a pessimistic person.

Metonymical face-based idioms of positive implications are relatively few and they include *you can see your face in it* (bitʕoof widʒhak feeh) and *your face and not the moonlight* (widʒhak wala d<sup>ʕ</sup>aw ilgamar). The former is used as a metonymy to signify anything tremendously clean such as car, door, floor, etc. It is so clean that one can see one's face in it as if it were a mirror. The latter is said while addressing the beloved person and used to express the longing and welcome to the beloved person after a long absence. This expression

means that one's appearance is better than the rising of the moonlight. Also, *saving face* and *losing face* are oppositional idioms employed in Arabic and English and express parallel meanings in both cultures; retaining respect and avoiding humiliation vs. suffering a loss of respect and humiliation. Finally, *someone with white face* (widʒhak/widʒhuh abyad<sup>6</sup>) is a metonymy for a peaceful person who is innocent of some charges blamed on him/her accidentally. In addition, Al-Adaileh (in press) argues that *white-faced* and *black-faced* are binary oppositions that are used metonymically to represent success or failure to fulfill one's promises.

### 3.3 Eye

Metonymic extensions associated with eye are common in Arabic and eye provides, like other body parts, a rich source of figurative meaning. This being the case, *someone steals khol (eyeliner) from eye* (bisrig elkhoh minil ʕein) is a common idiom that stands for how professional and skilled in robbery someone is. Another idiom which amounts to the same meaning but does not incorporate the body part *eye* is *someone gets the baby out of his mother's womb* (bitʕaliʕ ilwalad min batʕin umuh). Eye-based idioms that express negative meaning also include *sparks are flying from someone's eyes* (iʕʕarar bitgadah min ʕuyoon flan) which is used metonymically to refer to someone who is blinded by anger.

Instances of metonymy-based idioms that incorporate the eye and express negative meanings also include *someone with a deviant eye*, *someone with an empty eye*, and *showing someone a red eye*. *Someone with a deviant eye* (ʕeinuh zayyah) is used metonymically to refer to a man who does not leave a woman without staring at her in a very disrespectful way, indifferent to the feelings of his wife. *Someone with an empty eye* (ʕeinuh fadʕiyih) is used as a metonymical expression to stand for an envious person who envies all that is seen. It is used to describe a greedy person who is not convinced with anything possessed by him/her and keeps looking with envy at the things possessed by others. This idiom is used to warn and not reassure others of allowing such persons to enter their homes. Another idiom which is of great relevance to *someone with an empty eye* is *blue-eyed* (ʕeinuh zarga). Al-Adaileh (in press) argues that in Jordanian culture the latter is used to stand metonymically for the worst envious. In the same vein, *blue-eyed and spaced-teethed* (ʕuyoonuh zurug wissnanuh furug) is also used in Jordanian culture to stand for the enormously envious person. Though *blue-eyed* is currently used to describe detrimental envious people, ancient Arabs used it to metonymically refer to enemies of a high degree of hostility. Finally, the *red eye* in *showing someone a red eye* (wardʕeeha elʕein elhamra) symbolizes anger, firmness, and strength. When someone shows someone else a red eye, this means that someone has the power to stop someone else and deter him/her from doing something, if necessary. This idiom could also be used as advice by some people to a husband resisting wife's domination.

Metonymy-based idioms that express positive meanings are *it is the eye that eats* (elʕein ?lli btoukil) and *someone with a narrow eye* (ʕeinuh dʕayyah). *It is the eye that eats*, which is equivalent to the English *we eat with our eyes*, stands for the fact that what is found sweet by the eye is desired by self. The presentation of well-cooked food and the appeal of beautifully set food items on the table are likely to whet one's appetite. However, if the presentation of food is not appealing, then it is less desired by someone, even if hungry. When buying food from markets such as fruits and vegetables, it is the eye that sees and is attracted to the good ones, and this as such creates an internal desire to purchase that nice thing even if it is

expensive. This is because it is the eye that eats. As for *someone with a narrow eye*, it is used metonymically to stand for the generous person who, when preparing food for guests, feels the amount of food is less than adequate and more amounts of food should be added in order to feed guests well, though the existing amount of food is adequately sufficient. Though different in form, the Arabic *someone with a narrow eye* and the English *have eyes bigger than your stomach* could be said to be equivalent in terms of the illocutionary act expressed, as the latter stands for a person who has asked for or taken more food than he/she can actually eat. The semantic link between these two idioms should not necessarily be based on the notion of generosity, as this might not be the case in the English context, yet the shared pragmatic force of these idioms could be explained in terms of requesting or buying more than is needed. Finally, and as part of idioms of positive meanings is *put his/her eye at someone/something* (ḥatʕ ʕeinuh ʕaleih/ʕaleiha) which refers to a person who is looking at someone or something in a way which makes it clear that the person who is looking has decided to buy that thing (car, house, land, etc.) or decided to propose marriage to the other person being looked at.

Eye-based idioms that express equal meanings in English and Arabic include *have eyes in the back of your head* or (*my head*), *open someone's eyes*, *keep your eyes open*, and *with your eyes closed*. *Have eyes in the back of your head* or (*my head*) (leih ʕuyoon wara rasuh) symbolizes a person who seems to be able to sense or know what is happening beyond one's field of vision. *Open someone's eyes* (fattaḥit ʕuyoonuh) stands for enlightening someone about certain realities, causing him/her to realize or discover something about the truth. As for *keep your eyes open* (xalli ʕuyoonak imfatḥat), it is used to stand for the state of being on the alert or watching carefully for something. *With your eyes closed* (winta myammiḏʕ) metonymically describes doing something easily; without having to make much effort. However, and as part of the cross-cultural differences, the English *close your eyes to* is realized by and equivalent to the Arabic *close his/her ears to* (sakkar aḏanuh) which stands for refusing to notice or acknowledge something unwelcome or unpleasant.

### 3.4 Hand

Hand also provides a good source for metonymic extensions and hand-based idioms convey both positive and negative meanings. That said, *a hand that takes does not give*, *your hand and not the charity of others*, *someone's hand outruns his/her tongue (speech)*, *someone's hand and strike*, *someone with a long hand*, *someone's hand on his/her heart*, *someone with an empty hand*, *someone with a loose hand*, *someone with a short hand*, *someone with a dry hand*, *someone dug his/her grave by hand*, *someone withdrew his/her hand from someone/something*, *soften your hand (imperative)*, *as left by your hand*, *no power in hand*, *putting one's hand in another's throat* and *nobody hit him/her on the hand* are all instances of hand-based idioms that express negative meanings.

A *hand that takes does not give* (eleed illi btouxið ma bteʕtʕi) metonymically stands for the assumption that the person who requests the charity of others is not expected to donate. *Your hand and not the charity of others* (eedak wala dʒameelet innas) metonymically signifies self-dependence and no reliance on others. That is, someone should earn money from the work of his/her hands and not to live by begging. *Someone's hand outruns his/her tongue (speech)* (eeduh ibtsbig ilsanuh) and *his hand and strike* (eiduh wilihwah) stand for one meaning; someone is quick to react violently and that his/her hit is likely to outrun his/her warning. These idioms are indicative of a person who is less likely to employ his/her diplomatic skills while attempting to resolve a conflict. *Someone with a long hand* (eeduh tʕaweeleh) stands for a thief who steals anything within the reach of his/her hand. It is worth noting that a *long hand* underwent semantic change, in that this phrase which is currently used to symbolize negative meaning (thief), was used by ancient Arabs loaded with a positive meaning; the meaning of being a generous person. *Someone with a short hand* (eeduh gasʕeereh) is used to refer to a person who is unable to do anything, and this seems to be pragmatically equivalent to the English *someone's hands are tied*. It is also used to describe a person who is unable to participate in a certain activity due to lack of money, and this seems to be parallel to the English *from hand to mouth*.

*Someone with a dry hand* (eeduh naʕfeh) is a metonymy for stingy person. *Someone dug his/her grave by hand* (ħafar gabruh fi eeduh) stands for someone who caused harm to him/herself. This idiom could also be used to indirectly fulfill the speech act of warning. *Someone withdrew his hand from someone/something* (saħab eeduh minilmawðʕuʕ) metonymically stands for someone who has stopped material or moral support to a person or project. *Soften your hand (imperative)* (tʕtʕarri eedak) stands for the request of a bribe from someone in order to facilitate the services needed by him/her. *As left by your hand* (ʕala ħatʕit eidak) is used metonymically as an answer to the question of *how are you*. This idiom means that the person asked about health, work or the things in general remained unchanged. It means everything now is similar to that when the asker last saw the person who replies. *No power in hand* (ma feeh ħeeleh filyad) symbolizes the speaker's inability to handle or confront things. As for *putting one's hand in another's throat* (ħatʕ eeduh fi ħalguh), this idiom stands for a person who due to his illogical argument and imprudent behaviour caused the other person, who is known as a wise person, to behave violently in a very unexpected way. Finally, *nobody hit him/her on the hand* (ma nas ðʕarabuh ʕala eeduh) is used when someone who is less likely to accept the advice of others is now in trouble, and the idiom is used by other people to mean nobody obliged him/her to do that thing.

*To wash my hands of someone/something* (ʕassalit adayy minnuh/minilmawðʕuʕ) is a hand-based idiom that is used in Arabic and English and stands for one meaning common in the two cultures; the meaning of disassociating yourself from someone or something and accepting no responsibility for any repercussion that might happen. The Arabic *to bite the hand reached out to him/her* (biʕaðʕ eled illi inmadat leih) is also pragmatically equivalent to the English *to bite the hand that feeds you* and *have one's hand/fingers in the till* which stands for stealing money from one's employer.

Hand-based idioms that express positive meaning do exist in Jordanian Arabic, yet they are relatively few. Jordanian people overwhelmingly use *light-handed* (eeduh xafeefeh) to describe a person who works quickly, albeit diligently. This idiom is frequently used to describe a doctor or nurse who does not cause any pain when giving a patient an injection. However, few people use *light-handed* to negatively describe a thief who, because of his/her

agility, steals without being felt or noticed by others. Used in this sense, *light-handed* is pragmatically equivalent to the English *light-fingered*. *Someone with a reaching hand* (eeduh was<sup>ʔ</sup>leḥ) stands metonymically for someone who has the capacity and advantage over others to mediate and resolve problems because of his connections and friends in important positions in the state. Also, *someone with a soft hand* (declarative) (eeduh t<sup>ʔ</sup>aryyieh) is used to symbolize the generous person who is likely to donate when asked. Extended metonymically to also express positive meaning, *clean-handed* (eeduh nað<sup>ʕ</sup>eefeh) symbolizes a person who is honest and does not accept bribes. Finally, when *my hand is under your belt* (eedi tiḥt/fi ḥzamak) is said to someone, then the speaker is stressing how much greatly he/she depends on the addressee. This idiom is normally said to stress the speaker's interest in having his/her demands fulfilled by the addressee. It could also be used to stand for the speaker's acceptance of an offer from others.

### 3.5 Tongue

Body-based idioms that include metonymical extensions of tongue are *what is in someone's heart is on the top of his/her tongue*, *sweet-tongued but charityless*, *long-tongued*, *nothing tastes bitter with one's tongue*, *someone getting held by tongue*, and *someone spares nobody from his/her tongue*. *What is in someone's heart is on the top of his/her tongue* (illi fi galbuḥ ṣala ras ilsanuh) is used to metonymically stand for a person who is not cunning and deceptive and who does not hold any malice in his heart towards anyone. It stands for a one who spontaneously says what is in his/her heart. This idiom is also used to refer to a person who does not keep secrets. *Sweet-tongued but charityless* (laḏeeḏ ilsan galeel iḥsan) and *someone spares nobody from his/her tongue* (mu tarik nas minilsanuh) symbolize a person who normally speaks gently and politely to others, yet does not provide help if requested; one who keeps smiling in the face of others, yet might hurt them in a painful way. As for *long-tongued* (ilsanuh/ilsanha t<sup>ʔ</sup>aweel), this idiom stands for a talkative person who speaks in a disrespectful way to others, and who is, therefore, disliked and subject to the insult and reprimand of others. *Someone getting held by tongue* (binmasik min ilsanuh) refers to a faithful and steadfast person who keeps his/her promises and fulfills his/her commitments towards others. Finally, *nothing tastes bitter with one's tongue* (mafi iḥi murr ṣala ilsanuh) metonymically stands for someone who eats all types of food hating none of them. It could also be used to describe a greedy person who eats large amounts of food.

### 3.6 Other body parts

So far, we have discussed the metonymic idioms that are based on *head*, *face*, *eye*, *hand*, and *tongue* as enhancing many metonymical idioms in Jordanian Arabic when compared to the remaining body parts. Though the remaining body parts such as *hair*, *nose*, *mouth*, *teeth*, *neck*, *back*, *skin*, *blood*, and *leg* do not provide as rich a source for metonymic extensions, they appear employed in some frequently used idioms. With this in mind, hair-based idioms are relatively few, yet they are commonly used by most Jordanians. In relation to this, *someone with an upright hair* (faṣartuh imwaggfeh) implicates someone who, when spoken to in a disagreement situation, is less likely to listen to the other party and be involved in a lengthy conversation; one who due to his/her weak position resorts to violence and not the culture of dialogue as a way to resolve conflict or manage problematic situations.

However, *someone with an inclined hair* (faʕartuh sableh), which is the opposite of *someone with an upright hair*, metonymically refers to someone who bitterly gave up defending his/her argument or point of view in a long heated discussion due to the strong and convincing argument of the other party. This idiom could also be used to describe a person who used to be a trouble maker, yet because of the deterrent punishment or the fear of punishment, he/she became a peaceful person, not because he/she is peaceful, but because of the fear of punishment. Al-Adaileh (in press) argues that in a *red-haired person* (faʕartuh hamra), *red-haired* is metonymically extended to stand for a person who is always unjustly accused, always suspected, always less trusted, and always blamed upon. This metonymy-based idiom is common in Jordanian Arabic but much more common in Saudi Arabia. The story of this common Arabic metonymy could be explained by the assumption that when the hair is red in colour, anyone might doubt that and think that the hair is not really red but dyed red.

As for nose or nostril-based idioms, it was found that nose and nostrils are extended metonymically in just three idioms in Jordanian Arabic, and they are *someone's mind at the top of his/her nostril*, *someone's nose in the sky*, and *at the top of my nose*. *Someone's mind at the top of his/her nostril* (ʕagluh ʕala ras xaʕmuh/manaxeeruh) stands for a person who has been known to be quick to get angry; one who depends less on diplomatic skills, but resorts to violence and anger as a way to sort out conflict. This idiom is said as a warning and/or advice to someone confronting quick-to-get-angry people, if he/she gets involved in a conversation with them. *Someone's nose in the sky* (xaʕmuh fissama) is used metonymically to refer to an extremely arrogant person who, due to his/her social class, education, or wealth, ranks him/her self over other people. This idiom is also employed as a complaint by someone who has been trying pointlessly to reconcile with someone who is resistant to reconciliation. The English idiomatic expression *with your nose in the air* seems to correspond to the Arabic *someone's nose in the sky*, as it stands for a person who is scornfully and condescendingly proud. Finally, *at the top of my nose* (ʕala ras xaʕmee) is used positively by a person, expressing agreement and sincere desire to meet the polite request of another person.

*Someone with a mouth that eats and does not speak* (ilha ʕum youkil ma yiḥki), and *a tongueless mouth* (ʕum ma feeh ilsan) are the only two mouth-based idioms found in the data, and they both stress the significance of the attribute of being silent, out of politeness. Both idioms are used to describe mostly women who speak little when compared to loudmouthed women who keep trying to exert control over husbands. These idioms are normally used by a person praising a girl for a man who is planning to get married, and who is in the process of collecting more information about that girl. The pragmatic implication of the English *make someone's mouth water*, which stands for causing someone to salivate at the prospect of appetizing food or causing someone to feel an intense desire to possess something, is common in Jordanian Arabic but lexicalized differently. The Arabic linguistic form that realizes the corresponding meaning explained above is *someone salivating at having something* (salat ryaltuh).

Teeth also constitute a good source for metonymic extensions. Having said that, *someone with uprooted teeth* (isnānuh mxallaʕah/imgalliʕ), *someone with blue canine tooth* (nabuh azrag), and *green-toothed* (axdʕarinnawadʕið) are teeth-based idioms that express positive and negative meanings. *Someone with uprooted teeth* is a metonymical extension of a veteran and broadly experienced person who, in comparison with others, could easily find a way out of any hardship. In an attempt to investigate the pragmatic connotations of colour terms in

Arabic, Al-Adaileh (in press) argues that *someone with blue canine tooth* connotes a person who is skillful at deception, whereas *green-toothed* connotes a healthy person who constantly eats spring onion, leek, and any other green vegetables.

Neck has also been metonymically extended as in *long-necked person* (ragbatuh tʔaweeleh), an idiom that symbolizes a patient person who bears the hurt of others and rarely gets angry if involved in a heated discussion with others, even if offended. It should be noted that the metonymical idiom *long-necked* is confined to describe males only. If used to describe females, *long-necked* is no longer metonymically extended, but is used to describe a female who has a really long neck, and this is seen as a sign of female beauty. The metonymy-based idiom of *long-necked* is to be contrasted with a *short breath person* (nafasuh gasʔeer) which is an idiom that stands for a person who is unlikely to get involved in long-lasting heated debate due to his/her inability to stand the critique of others. Though breath is not strictly a part of the body, it has been reported in this study as a common metonymical idiom that is widely used by most Jordanians.

*Backless person* (ma leih ʔaʔher) and *strong-backed person* (ʔaʔruh gawee) are oppositional back-based idioms, in that the former stands for a person who has nobody to protect him/her or provide assistance in the time of need, whereas the latter refers to someone who is strongly supported by people who are in high governmental positions. In addition, *someone with a broken back* (ʔaʔruh maksoor) metonymically stands for a bereaved person who is grieving the death of a family member such as son, brother, wife, etc., though in English *broken heart* is used to serve the same function.

As for skin-based idioms, *thin-skinned* (dʒilduh rageeg) and *thick-skinned* (dʒilduh imtamsih) are oppositional idioms that are used in Jordanian Arabic and English as well to stand for being oversensitive or insensitive to criticism or insults. In Jordanian Arabic, *thin-skinned* could be used to stand for debtors who feel embarrassed when they find themselves unable to pay back the money to their creditors, or debtors who promptly make some arrangements that could help them avoid the slow or late payments to the creditors. *Skin and bone* (dʒild wa ʕaʔimʔ) is another skin-based idiom that exists in Arabic and English and stands for being very thin.

*Thick-blooded* (dammuh ʔageel) and *thin-blooded* (dammuh xafeef) are also oppositional blood-based idioms, in that the former stands for a meddling person who likes to interfere in a very meddling, intrusive, or offensive manner into other peoples' business and gets involved in situations that do not concern him/her. *Thin-blooded* metonymically stands for a person who is not intrusive and less likely to interfere into other peoples' business. The Arabic *blood never turns into water* (iddam ma bisʔeer mayyieh) is equivalent to the English *blood is thicker than water*, in that both idioms mean that family ties are stronger and more important than other kinds of relationships. *In my (your) blood* (fi dammi/dammuh) is another idiom that is used in both cultures and rhetorically stands for one meaning; having something fundamental to someone's character, like when saying swimming is in my blood. Similarities between Arabic and English also include the Arabic *there is blood between (two parties)* (beinham dam) and the English *there is bad blood between...* and the figurative meaning of these equivalent idioms is that there is long-standing hostility between two parties. The Arabic idiom *there is blood between (two parties)* is usually used to describe a situation when a murder took place leaving two parties: the victim's tribe and the perpetrator's tribe whose members (only blood relatives) are normally evacuated from their livelihoods temporarily by the government for their safety. The Arabic *there is blood between (two parties)* is further

extended to describe any long-lasting clash between any two persons. The common Jordanian idiom *the cat is killed between them* (ilgut<sup>ʕ</sup> maḏbuḥ beinathum) is widely used to describe the same situation.

Leg is incorporated in two idioms only. *With one's sight between legs* (naḏ<sup>ʕ</sup>aruh bein riḏzleih) is a leg-based idiom that refers to a person who fails to consider different possibilities or to foresee the consequences of his/her actions. This Arabic idiom seems to be similar to the English *cannot see further than your nose*, as it amounts to the same meaning. In Jordanian Arabic, *one leg is backward and the other is forward* (riḏzil wara wa riḏzil giddam) symbolizes a person who is hesitant and unable to decide what should be done.

#### 4 Conclusion

The primary goal of this study was to investigate the positive and negative pragmatic implications of body-based idioms that are enhanced by metonymy. It was found that metonymical idioms that include lexis for *head, face, eye, hand, tongue, and leg* predominantly implicate negative meanings. Also, whereas metonymy-enhanced idioms that include body parts such as *hair, nose, tongue, teeth, back, skin and blood* were found to be expressing positive and negative meanings almost equally, metonymical idioms that are based on *mouth and neck* were found to be conveying positive meaning only. It might be possible to argue that the use of the majority of body-based idioms is enhanced by the need to be polite. Having said that, we could say that the use to which these idioms are established and maintained is to protect the speaker's and/or the addressee's face. Idioms in general and those examined in this study in particular are all examples of indirect communication of opinions, human states and behaviour. That is, they are employed by most Jordanians to politely communicate evaluative and subjective opinions.

As explained previously, all idioms explored in this study are enhanced by metonymy (intra-domain mapping), and this should not imply that metaphorical (cross-domain mapping) body-based idioms do not exist, yet they are relatively very few. Only two idioms were found to be metaphorical and they are *someone's heart is a rock* (galbuh ḥaḏzar) and *someone's intestines are gold* (mas<sup>ʕ</sup>areenuh ḏahab), with the former expressing the meaning of an emotionless person and the other a wealthy person. Though the above examples seem to have an element of metonymy (stand-for relationship), they are outside the scope of this study whose main goal is to explore clear-cut examples of metonymy, not instances where metaphor and metonymy may interact. Culturally and linguistically speaking, all the examples reported in this study, once again, are to be regarded as examples of clear-cut metonymies.

The metonymical idioms reported in this study are examples of conventional and established idioms that are frequently exchanged between Jordanians who are aware of their pragmatic implications. With this in mind, it would be interesting if further research is conducted on general ambiguous metonymical idioms (excluding those based on body parts, as they are not ambiguous) that have the potential of bringing about communicative breakdown intraculturally.



## Appendix: Phonetic Symbols used in the study

<b>b</b> : voiced bilabial plosive	<b>ʈʂ</b> : voiceless postalveolar affricate
<b>m</b> : bilabial nasal	<b>l̪</b> : postalveolar lateral approximant
<b>f</b> : voiceless labiodental fricative	<b>j</b> : palatal approximant
<b>d</b> : voiced dental plosive	<b>g</b> : voiced velar plosive
<b>t</b> : voiceless dental plosive	<b>k</b> : voiceless velar plosive
<b>n</b> : dental nasal	<b>ɣ</b> : voiced velar fricative
<b>ð</b> : voiced dental fricative	<b>x</b> : voiceless velar fricative
<b>θ</b> : voiceless dental fricative	<b>w</b> : labio-velar approximant
<b>z</b> : voiced alveolar fricative	<b>q</b> : voiceless uvular plosive
<b>s</b> : voiceless alveolar fricative	<b>ʕ</b> : voiced pharyngeal fricative
<b>r</b> : alveolar trill	<b>ħ</b> : voiceless pharyngeal fricative
<b>ʒ</b> : voiced postalveolar fricative	<b>ʔ</b> : glottal plosive
<b>ʃ</b> : voiceless postalveolar fricative	<b>h</b> : voiceless glottal fricative
<b>ʤ</b> : voiced postalveolar affricate	

Pharyngealised consonants are marked with ʕ: tʕ, dʕ, sʕ, ðʕ, lʕ. (Adopted from Suleiman, S. 1985: 30)

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