

A Cross-Cultural Account of the Metaphor Conceptualisations of THOUGHT AS FOOD in Persian

Zahra Khajeh*#, Imran Ho-Abdullah and Tan Kim Hua

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, School of Language Studies and Linguistics,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

The eating experience, being vitally essential for the survival of human beings, can be extended to convey other conceptually abstract experiences. As a cognitive-semantic account of metaphor conceptualisations, this study aims to investigate the relationship between food-related metaphorical concepts and Persian cultural cognition and cultural models, as well as how they influence the targeted speakers' beliefs and ideas. Following the orientation of experientialists' views (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999) and most discussions of metaphorical concepts since then within the cognitive linguistics movement, this study in particular explores the commonalities and variations in ontological metaphor conceptualisations of thought/ideas as food in a cross-cultural comparative study of English and Persian. The metaphoric extensions of food and cognition in Persian, to a great extent, are mediated and motivated by embodied experiences; as well as socio-cultural orientation, Iranian traditional medicine and the spiritual tradition of Sufism as it is shown through the marginal role the Persian language plays a role in the rational-irrational dichotomy.

Keywords: Cross-culture, conceptualisation, mapping, embodiment, em-mindedness, cognition

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 2 September 2013

Accepted: 3 March 2014

E-mail addresses:

khajehz7@gmail.com (Zahra Khajeh),

imranho@ukm.my (Imran Ho-Abdullah),

kimmy@ukm.my (Tan Kim Hua),

* Corresponding author

Author's current affiliation

Department of English, Kazeroun Branch,

Islamic Azad University, Kazeroun, Iran

INTRODUCTION

Since George Lakoff and Mark Johnson first introduced the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) in their *Metaphor We Live By* (1980), an extensive debate emerged regarding cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology. The book has become the icon of a new perspective of metaphor analysis, in which metaphors are not considered as

just dispensable ornaments of language in poetic and rhetorical dimensions, but have cognitive significance and, in most cases, they cannot be substituted by any form of literal language. In reality, indeed, abundant data collected from a variety of research have shown that most of the metaphorical expressions the native speakers of a certain language produce are based on conceptual metaphors. Such research and viewpoints have initiated a very significant issue in cognitive linguistics as to what extent and in what ways conceptual metaphors are relevant to universalities that can be found and utilised in all languages and cultures (e.g. Kövecses, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010).

This study, therefore, is a step in the process of investigating the cross-cultural universalities and/or variations of food-related metaphor conceptualisations through examining the data taken from Persian. Adopting an experiential notion of interpreting metaphorical expressions cognitively as a cross-domain mapping from a source (more delineated) domain to the target (less delineated) domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Lakoff, 1987), the present research explores how metaphorical constituents reflect various cognitive and cultural models by investigating the metaphor conceptualisations of thought/ideas as food in the Persian language. The most general supposition to make at this juncture is that due to the prominent significance of food in everyday life as a specific source of nourishment and exquisite pleasure, food/eating has a pervasive use in a variety of cultures and languages as a concrete source

domain mapping thought/ideas as target domains. Thought/ideas as food is metaphor conceptualisation we live by in various related or unrelated cultures. Moreover, when researchers deal with the issue of food-related metaphor similarities and their motivations across a variety of cultures, they address it mostly in terms of conjectures rather than synchronic and diachronic proofs. One of the concerns of this study will be to distinguish between the universalities of metaphor and the type specific to the Persian society and culture searching for various proposition-schemas at work in Persian speakers' conceptualisations. As the linguistic data suggest, the images of food-related metaphor conceptualisations occur extensively in Persian, indicating their close correspondence with Persian culture, myth, folklore, race, identity, religion, spirituality, community and body as well (Khajeh & Imran-Ho, 2012, p. 84).

PERSIAN CULTURAL COGNITION AND EM-MINDED CULTURAL NOTIONS – THOUGHT AS FOOD

Duality of 'Head-Heart' Centring Conceptualisation in Persian

In their book, *Culture, Body, and Language: Conceptualizations of Internal Body Organs Across Cultures and Languages*, Sharifian and co-authors (2008) stress on three major body parts as the locus of rationality: 'head', 'heart' and 'abdomen'. According to these scholars, the dominant cultural characteristic of Southern Asian and Polynesian peoples is recognised as 'abdomincentrism'. Moreover, while the

Indonesian and Malay languages use the liver as the seat of intellect and reasoning, the Australian language (Kuuk Theayorne) uses the belly when discussing rationality. On the other hand, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese people's seat of thinking is located in their heart, referred to as cardiocentrism, and for European and Greek-based Western Asians, it is manifested in their head (mind) which is known as cerebrocentrism (Sharifian *et al.*, 2008, pp.14-16).

In fact, there is a clear-cut division between intellect and emotion in Western culture, which is especially derived from Cartesian dualism beliefs. Having its origin in Classical Greek thinking, Western culture deeply relies on the dichotomy between the body (material) and the soul (immaterial). In other words, the locus of irrational emotion and desires is the heart as part of the body, while rational thoughts, ideas and intelligence reside in the mind and are largely disembodied (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Persian is among those languages that conceptualise the intellect and emotion as 'body and soul', upholding a marginal role in cerebrocentrism. The concept of *del* ('heart') in Persian may refer to some aspects of intellect and reasoning. The cognitive-related conceptualisations of *del* is associated with Sufism, Avicenna's doctrine of four humours and experiential reality. It seems the concept of *del* in Persian corresponds to the notion of *gogo* in Basque, representing inner drives. *Gogo* is a cultural word in Basque, or as Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2012) describes it, "Specific conceptualizations of the world which are

particular to a given cultural community and comprise all lexical items grounded in one specific culture. Cultural words are language vehicles to discover deep conceptualizations in culture and thought."

Something interesting about the Persian *del* is that it seems *del* does not dichotomise the rational and irrational in Persian culture, as both the rational and the irrational are blended and unified into one sense, conceptualising affective and cognitive processes as being one process. The concept can be best recognised in the figurative expression *az del beravad har ān-ke az dide beraft* (lit. from heart goes anyone who from sight goes), meaning 'one who is out of sight will be forgotten', which corresponds to the English expression, 'Out of sight, out of mind'. While in English remembering is represented by 'mind', it is conceptualised by the Persian heart, implying that the loss of memory can be associated with a loss of love or affection as well. *del* can be described as a primitive soul at which a rational reasoning process, together with all sorts of intuitional and emotional influences take place. Consequently, *del* is not merely a physical concrete organ but more importantly, an inner drive and self, depicting both body and soul as a whole. In other words, *del* is a cultural word, conceptualising the unique worldviews of Persians. It is evident that the body part *del*, 'heart', is responsible for a wide range of conceptualisations in Persian, used to hold affective senses as emotion, desire, intuition, patience and courage as well as cognitive processes as thought, ideas and memories.

The Concept of Del and Thinking as Eating as Metaphor

The various conceptualisations of *del* are very likely motivated by certain cultural models in Persian. Iranian traditional medicine and Sufism as worldviews are among the most influential pathways in Persian culture in constructing metaphorical concepts in general and shaping culinary expressions in particular. Following the Greek tradition, in Iranian traditional medicine, the 'heart' and 'liver' have predominant influences over the other organs of the body. In line with Aristotle's ideas, Avicenna (1930) believed that *ravān* 'soul/psyche' originated from the heart. Moreover, in his theory of four humours, Avicenna stressed that the primary humours of the body originated from the food digestion process and that human personality could be identified with respect to prominent body-temperament properties (Khajeh *et al.*, 2013a, b).

The spiritual tradition of Sufism, on the other hand, influenced the conceptual faculty of the Persian people, which is fully manifested in Iranians' way of thinking, their psyche and their literary works. Sufi literature contains a great number of metaphorical expressions conceptualising *del* with 'thinking' in food/eating domains. In Sufism, for example, the concept of food is adopted and used to refer to a versatile symbol, depicting the visible world. It may also be mapped onto the concept of divine nourishment and sustenance, the unseen world now made visible through a reference to its edibility.

The abundant instances of food-related and kitchen-related metaphors in the works of writers and poets of Sufism and their concern for making a connection between various states of mind and those of the body, all indicate the essential role of the processes, which a cook (human being) embodies. The alchemy of operations in the kitchen and during the cooking process can all be conceptualised and mapped onto what is involved in all creation. In the process of transformation of raw into ripe, visible into invisible, or external into internal state of food, it is the cook who must consider the nature of substances to maximise their potential for human sustenance, changing them into soul. The cook, moreover, is aware of the qualities of the food, and appropriately organises them in a manner to enhance the harmony between the body organs and nourishment, a harmony that leads to the sustenance of the soul. The cook has to pay heed to the food flavour, odour, colour and essence, as well as to the properties of the food i.e. if it is hot or cold, if it expands or contracts, and if it influences thought or emotion, flourishing intensity or calmness. In the body, the result of this apprehension and discrimination transforms the meticulously-selected attributes of food into strength and vitality, intellect and spirit and this makes the food fully pleasing i.e. it will be consumed with heart and soul, as shown in a poem by Moelana Jalal-uddin Rumi (1207-1273), the most popular Sufi writer: '*My heart boils up, aspiring to your heat; closes its eyes to grope what you see clear.*'

The image schema found in the above example conceptualises a ‘man of heart’ who is associated with divine love, and being cooked and boiled indicates spiritual maturation of the human soul. ‘Heart’ and ‘divine love’ are conceptualised in a container-content relationship as it is studied and discussed in the sense of Lakoff (1987), Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff and Turner (1989). Similar to the ‘ordeal’ the food ingredients endure in the cooking/boiling process, the heart is pictured as a boiling pan (container) representing the process of preparation and transformation into the human soul that experiences inner feeling and divine love (content). The underlying conceptual pattern ‘heart as container’ and ‘heart as entity’ (which can boil) in Persian encompasses *del* as the locus of intellect, reasoning, understanding as well as affection and spirituality; metaphorising ‘boiling hot heart’ as a conceptual framework to represent the degree of getting closer to God.

The metaphoric concepts of Persian figurative expressions that use *del*, as it is shown, are largely originated from a synthesis of different aspects of traditional faculties of Persian culture, religion, medicine and philosophy, mysticism and spiritual beliefs. In other words, *del* in Persian, traditionally, is viewed as the seat of wisdom and spiritual knowledge that is much deeper than the rational mind. The spiritual attributes related to the concept of *del* are still alive and are extensively used in present day Persian metaphorical expressions.

Based on the conceptual schema of *del* as the seat of thinking, therefore, *del* can be associated with intellectualism and reason. In Persian, one may talk about the inability to understand someone’s words or thoughts while conceptualising it in the source domain of eating activity. The expression *qazā sar-e del-am mund-e* (food head-GEN del-POSS-1SG remain-PCTP-is) roughly means, ‘I have difficulty in digesting food in my stomach’; the negative feeling of pain or restlessness from overeating is felt in *del* or stomach. The same schema can be extended in expressions associating *del* with thoughts and ideas that are difficult to be understood (digested) as in:

- (1) *tamām-e harf-hā-š sar-e*
 all-GEN word-PL-POSS-3SG head-GEN
del-am mund-e del-POSS-1SG stay-PCTP-is
 All his words have stood on my heart.
 ‘I cannot digest/comprehend his words.’

It seems that both Iranian Traditional Medicine and the Sufi belief system have highly dominant effects on Persians’ conceptualisations and worldviews, motivating certain metaphorical constructions of body parts such as *del* in Persian. It is noteworthy to add that the cultural models explored here are not of totally distinct faculties, but both share the fundamental concepts of their belief systems, and are influenced by one another, leading to particular cultural conceptualisations in Persian.

Lakoffian Theory of Conceptual Metaphor Thought as Food

The food/eating domain reflects strong correspondences with intellectual realities in many languages. The ontological conceptual metaphor ideas/cognition as food denotes the image schema of an eating process representing structural similarities between the concrete domain of food and those of ideas (Kövecses, 2010). The general conceptual mappings between the concepts in the two domains are shown in the following table:

TABLE 1
Mapping of Food and Ideas (adapted from Kövecses, 2010)

FOOD Domain	IDEAS Domain
Preparing	Producing
Taking in	Perceiving
Processing	Understanding
Nourishment/ Sustenance	Physical/Mental well being

It is to be noted that the perception of structural similarities is motivated by some underlying primary concepts the language users have about mind, thinking process and human communication. As Reddy (1979) puts it, the metaphorical concepts ‘ideas are objects, words are containers’, and ‘communication is sending’ (through a conduit) are pervasive in most languages. Lakoff (1987, p. 450) further developed the container metaphor, and suggested the concepts ‘the mind is a container’ and ‘ideas are entities’. Therefore, for communication to take place, we take *the ideas out of our mind*, and *put them into certain words*, and then words stand for the concepts

they express (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). The mappings between the ontological conceptual metaphors of mind and those of non-metaphorical bodily experience of food and eating are shown in the following:

TABLE 2
Mapping of Conceptual Metaphor of ‘Mind’ and ‘Food’

Ontological metaphor of MIND	Non-metaphorical experience of FOOD
MIND IS A CONTAINER	The body is a container
IDEAS ARE OBJECTS	Food consists of objects
COMMUNICATION IS SENDING IDEAS FROM ONE MIND-CONTAINER TO ANOTHER	We take food in from the outside and it travels through the body

As the above table illustrates, we deal with intellectual realities (ideas, thought and mind) in a manner that assimilates the structural knowledge we experience with food, eating and the body, which in turn facilitates understanding of conceptually dissimilar domains. This concept of container-content can be best regarded as the idea of boundedness. Humans are bounded physical beings and are mostly inclined to associate less accessible abstract entities to the closest concrete realities. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), “We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world as outside of us. Each of us is a container with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation” (p. 29).

The underlying primary metaphors, for example ‘mind is a container’, are molecular, and are naturally constructed

through a conflation of experiences that lead to cross-domain mappings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, 47-48). Complex metaphors, however, are constructed through conceptual blending of some primary metaphors. They do not have explicit embodiment grounding, but their construction is grounded on the basis of their constituent parts i.e. the experiential grounding of generic primary metaphors. ‘Thinking is eating’, for instance, is considered a complex metaphor that is shaped from the primary conceptual metaphors ‘mind is a container’, and ‘ideas are food’. In what follows, a schematic representation of conceptual mapping between ‘food and ideas’ is suggested through an example in Persian as in Fig.1

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a qualitative introspection-based study of food-related metaphorical conceptualisations of ideas and thought. The data for the study mainly involved naturally occurring and non-literary spoken-written citations of food-related themes, and therefore were far more likely to be typical of everyday language in use rather than those invented or poetic corpora suggested and discussed in the Contemporary Metaphor Theory. The corpus, thus, has been taken from documented material, both print and on-line databases of Persian food-related metaphors from a variety of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and some other lexicographical works such as dictionaries

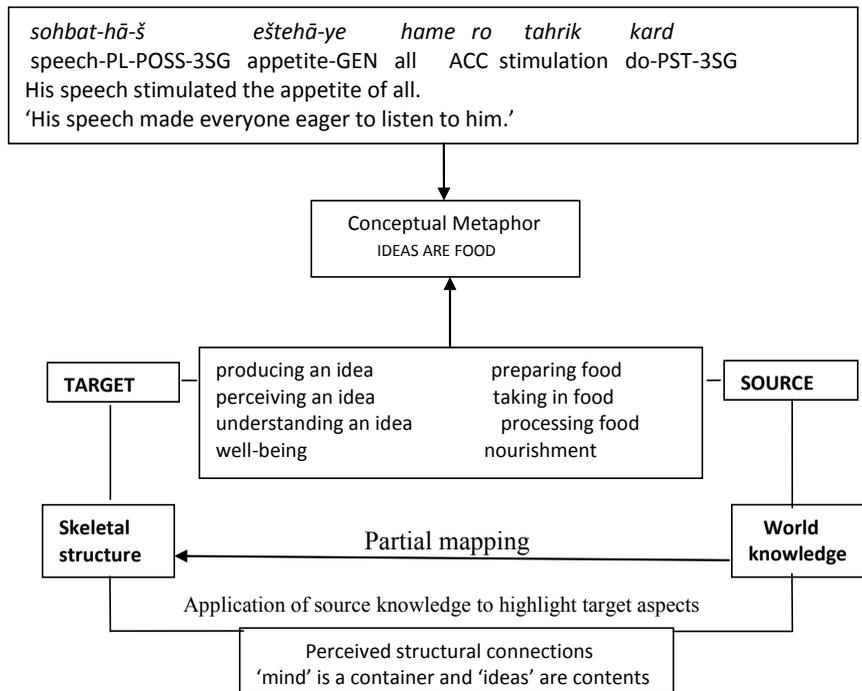


Fig. 1: Schematic representation of conceptual metaphor *sohbat-hā-š eštehā-ye hame ro tahrik kard*

of idiomatic metaphorical expressions and thesauri and native speakers' intuition of Persian linguistic metaphors. The analysis is mainly based on the author's intuition as a native speaker of Persian. It has been further crossed-checked informally by other native speakers of Persian. The consulted Persian dictionaries are *loqatnāme-ye dehxodā* (Dekhoda Dictionary), 1998; *farhang-e jāme vāžegān; amsāl-o- hekam-e dehxodā* (Proverbs and Mottos), 1999; *Farhang-e amid* (Amid Dictionary), 1992; *farhang-e bozorg-e soxan* (The comprehensive Dictionary of Talk), 2002; *farhang-e fāarsi-englisi* (English-Persian Dictionary), 1984.

The corpus involves various patterns related to the food and eating domain, which can broaden the scope of food-related metaphorical concepts. It consists of keywords for food and eating as well as those body organs associated with the eating act, eating-related verbs, the terms referring to food preparation, food ingredients, cooking traditions and styles, the instruments applied in the eating process and food quality such as flavour, smell and shape.

Linguistic metaphorical expressions of 'ideas as food' and 'thinking as eating' are analysed based on real-world knowledge about the bodily experience of eating. It searches for the image schematic correspondences between each source-target domain pairing and for their related entities, qualities and functions. The underlying mapping principle for each metaphor conceptualisation of the food domain, as Su (2002) points out, can be reflected in 'ingredients' of food,

'flavour' of food, 'preparation' of food and 'digestion' of food, which can be subsequently mapped conceptually into the some certain aspects of the thought domain such as 'content', 'quality', 'production' and 'comprehension', through which a certain proposition-schema can be postulated for each pairing. The findings will then illuminate the cultural backgrounds of 'cognition' concepts in Persian, leading us to portray the cultural motivations for their construction or semantic changes. Since the general framework of this study is based on the underlying assumptions made by CMT, it is expected that the findings of such a cognitive-semantic cross-cultural study would rectify this theory in general and food-related conceptualisations of 'thought' in specific.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To illustrate the heuristic procedures used in the analysis, the proposed proposition-schema for the metaphor conceptualisation of 'thought as food' is introduced in the section below.

Proposition-schemas in the Conceptualisation of 'Thought Is Food' Metaphor

The content of thought is the ingredient of food. In Persian, speakers often encounter metaphorical expressions such as:

- (2) *goft- e- hā-š por o peymān ast*
 speech-GEN-PL-POSS-3SG full and scale is
 His speech contains much ingredient.
 'His speech is informative.'/
 ('His speech contains a lot of information.')

- (3) *harf-hā-š* *bi* *māye fatir-e*
 Word-PL-POSS-3SG without - material azymic is
 His words do not contain ingredient.
 ‘His words are not informative/helpful enough.’

The above sentences use the terms *por-o peymān* ‘have much ingredient’, and *bi-māye* ‘without ingredient’ to refer to the content of the speech or knowledge of the speaker associated with the ingredient or content of food made by good or bad material. The ingredients of food are conceptualised as the content of thought/knowledge/language using metaphorical concepts of the word originally taken from the ingredients of food.

The quality of thought is the flavour of food. In Persian, there are metaphorical expressions which contain the flavour of food to describe the quality of thought as in:

- (4) *harf- hā-š* *širin- e /talx-e/ xām-e/ na-poxte ast/*
 word-PL-POSS-3SG sweet is/ bitter is/ raw is/
 uncooked is/
bā-maze ast/ bi-maze ast
 tasteful is/ tasteless is
 ‘His words are sweet/bitter/raw/uncooked/
 tasteful/tasteless.’

- (5) *ādam- e* *xām- iye/* *poxte- iye*
 person-GEN raw is/ cooked is
 He is raw/cooked.
 ‘He is inexperienced/knowledgeable and
 experienced.’

In English, the expressions ‘sweet thought’ or ‘bitter thought’ use flavour of food to illustrate the quality of thought and ideas. In these expressions, food flavour is

metaphorically transferred to the quality of thought. The examples manifest that a variety of flavours of food domains are metaphorically extended to qualify the ideas and thought in Persian; while some are metaphorically applied to modify spoken words (sweet, bitter, raw, uncooked), some are specifically used to modify the degree of experience or knowledge of the speakers (raw, cooked). Consequently, what is mapped in the target domain of thought can be either general concepts or specific ideas.

Generally speaking, sweet tasty food is consistently utilised in most cultures to refer to positive and pleasant mental qualities, bearing the general schema ‘sweetness is perceived as positive’; nevertheless, there are specific metaphor instantiations shedding light on the underlying cultural differences. In Persian, the metaphorical expression *širin aql* ‘sweet mind’ conveys the idea of stupidity, endowing the term with negative connotation, manifesting the schema ‘sweetness is perceived as negative’. The metaphorical concept of related expressions can be found in the traditional/historical beliefs of Iranians regarding donkey’s meat, which was considered sweet, but had a negative connotation, as consumers of the meat had had to consume it during famine and war.

It is important to say that conceptual mapping is a complicated cognitive phenomenon, which involves multi-level conceptualisation in a hierarchical nature. Therefore, from a cognitive perspective, understanding metaphorical themes would not be an easy task; it might entail much

complexity. However, our mind seems to be naturally capable of organising basic knowledge in a hierarchical manner to enable us to interpret intricate meaning expressed in metaphorisation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). To show how two or more propositions are blended together in a chain to represent more complex conceptual metaphors, consider the following example:

(6) *ye del-e por harf dalam ke
az bas širin-e*

one heart-GEN full word have-1SG that
from much sweet-is

sir ne-mi-iši

full NEG-PROG- become-2SG

I have a heart full of words, so much sweet that you
do not become full.

'I have tonnes of such sweet words to speak that it
makes you eager/hungry to know them all.'

In this example, the bodily organ 'belly/stomach' as a container for food to be stored and digested is metaphorically regarded as the container for holding words. Through the conduit metaphor 'words are objects', the words are thus conceptualised as objects that can be contained in a container. In addition, (6) entails 'the container of food is the container of thought' image schema through which the 'content of belly/stomach' in the food domain is mapped onto the words as the 'content of the mind' in the thought domain. On the other hand, the term *por* or 'full' metaphorically profiles the large amount of food in a container which is further mapped onto the quantity of thought as it could be measured in a container. Thus, the image schema 'the quantity of thought

is the quantity of food' can be understood through conceptual entailments in the proposition schema 'the quantity of thought is measured by the quantity of food in its container'. In order to decode its meaning, one more proposition schema as 'the quality of thought is the flavour of food' is needed. Sweetness as the pleasant taste of food is mapped conceptually into an arousing, pleasant thought. As such, the linguistic metaphorical expression of (5) makes sense to us because it comprises the conceptual themes as in the following:

1. Conceptual metaphor:
'thought as food'
2. Conduit metaphor:
 - a. 'words are objects'
 - b. 'words are containers of ideas'
3. Image schema
'the container of food is the container of thought'
4. Proposition schema:
 - a. 'the quantity of thought is measured by the quantity of food in its container'
 - b. 'the quality of thought is the flavour of food'

The formation of thought is the preparation of food. The proposition schema here illustrates the formation of thoughts, and the thought here is conceptualised as the preparation of food, as in:

(7) *be harf- hā- š xeili čāšni mi- zan-e*
to word-PL-POSS-3SG much spice PROG-
hit-3SG

He adds too much spice to his words.

‘He exaggerates too much.’

Here, the sentence means he embellishes his speech with pompous or inflated words (i.e. ‘spice’) to convince others to agree with him.

(8) *ideh-hā-ye jadidi dar zehn- aš dar hāl- e*
idea-PL-GEN new in mind-POSS-3SG in now
GEN

qavām āmad-an-e
inspissations come-INF is

New ideas are being inspissated in his mind.

‘Well-organised new ideas are being shaped in his mind.’

The expression *qavām āmadan* ‘inspissations’, in the sentence above, means forming a new idea or proposal of a new concept. The process involved in the production of new concepts in speech and mind is analogous with the formation and preparation of food. The basic meaning of *qavām āmadan* in the food domain is to cause the food to be thickened as by boiling or evaporation, making it well cooked and thick. This process is metaphorically used in the thought domain, profiling the abstract notion of forming a well-constructed new concept or thought. Thus, the metaphorical conceptualisation of this expression in the Persian culinary lexicon is used to describe this notional transfer from the source domain (food) onto the target domain (thought).

The comprehension of thought is the digestion of food. There are verbs in Persian that manifest the process of digestion (comprehension/understanding)

as a metaphorical conceptualisation of ‘comprehension of thought is the digestion of food’. Digestion refers to an act of assimilating food in a form that can be absorbed and utilised by the body.

(9) *moratab harf-hā -š ro dar zehn- aš*
always word-PL-POSS-3SG ACC in mind-
POSS-3SG

nošxār mi- kone

rumination PROG-do-3SG

He always ruminates his words in the mind.

‘He always contemplates what he says.’

nošxār kardan (rumination), a compound verb in which the nominal element *nošxār* consists of *noš* ‘drinking’ + *xār* ‘eating’ is used to express food digestion by ruminants, but in Persian, it is metaphorically applied in special contexts referring to the contemplation of knowledge, speech or thought in general. It implies the digestion of something that was consumed previously, repeatedly. This is a concept formed upon the metaphor, ‘comprehension of thought is the digestion of food’.

This type of conceptual mapping can be expressed by a variety of verbs in Persian as *xordan* ‘eating’, *bali’dan* ‘swallowing’, *hazm kardan* ‘digesting’, *javidan* ‘chewing’, *jazb kardan* ‘absorbing’, *gāz zadan* ‘biting’, *makidan* ‘nibbling/sucking’, *češidan* ‘tasting’ the food, originally used in the food domain and metaphorically applied to refer to processing and understanding knowledge in a general sense. ‘Thought’ as used here can be either abstract, meaning knowledge, the outcomes of a study or simply the words uttered. These

and so many other words represent our daily concepts of ideas/thought referred to as metaphors used in our culture that colour our language. In fact, food processing in the body is likened to internalising ideas or mentally absorbing notions in many related and unrelated languages and cultures. This general metaphor conceptualisation can be subdivided into more precise concepts as follows:

Learning is eating.

- (10) *u xore ketāb dār-e*
 he eater book has -3SG
 He is a book eater.
 ‘He loves books a lot.’

Understanding is tasting.

- (11) *harf-hā-t ro maze maze*
kon, ba’d begu
 word-PL-POSS-2SG ACC taste taste do-2SG,
 then say-2SG
 Taste your words, then speak.
 ‘Understand what you want to say before you speak.’

Understanding is digesting.

- (12) *harf-hā-i ro ke to mi-gi,*
hich kas
 word-PL-GEN ACC that you PROG-say-
 2SG, no body
ne-mi-tune hazm kon-e
 NEG-PROG-can-3SG digestion do-3SG
 The words that you say, nobody can digest them.
 ‘What you say cannot be understood by anyone.’

Understanding is chewing.

- (13) *harf-hā -t ro xub bejo,*
ba’d begu
 word-PL-POSS-2SG ACC good chew-2SG,

then say-2SG

Chew your words well, then speak.

‘Understand what you want to say before you speak.’

Accepting/ understanding is swallowing. The manifestation of the conceptual metaphor ‘the mind is the body’ is reflected in the metaphorical expression, ‘swallowing an idea’. The concept is grounded in our common experience of ‘body’ and ‘mind’. Accepting or rejecting pleasant/unpleasant ideas metonymically implies the swallowing of food. The mapping principle for the conceptual metaphor ‘accepting/understanding is swallowing’ lies in the fact that both ideas and food are expected to be consumed and processed by the mind and the body respectively. In other words, the act of swallowing is mapped on to the processing, comprehending or acquiescing of thoughts and ideas. Swallowing stands for the whole process of the activity of eating, carrying a particular metonymic concept. It mostly corresponds to the act of drinking a liquid substance with minimal physical management of the active zones of eating as an activity. In Persian, for example, *drinking from the elixir of knowledge, wisdom and love* manifest the discovery and understanding of these abstractions. Thus, as the following examples represent, swallowing a liquid in Persian denotes experiencing a mental focus on the intended concept.

- (14) *mesl-e āb-e xordan hame ro*
 like-GEN water-GEN eating all ACC
az bar-am

from memory-be- PRS-1SG

Like drinking water, I know all from my memory.
'I know all by heart.'

(15) *dar yek češm be ham zadan hame-*
ye doruq-hā-š

in one eye to gether hit-INF all-GEN
lie-PL-POSS-3SG

ro bali'd, ye āb ham
ru-š ACC swallow-PST-3SG, one water also
on-DEM.PRO

In the twinkling of one eye, he swallowed all his
lies.

'He instantly swallowed all his lies.'

Moreover, in Persian, abstractions such as knowledge, wisdom and love are metaphorised as physical needs, in the form of water, food and fruit. The conceptual metaphor 'abstract needs are physical needs', therefore, shows the correspondence between the source domain of eating and that of intellection, which is reflected in Persian expressions such as *tešne-ye dāneš* 'thirst for knowledge', or *gorosne-ye tajrobe-hā-ye jadid* 'hungry of new experiences'. We visualise the bodily experience of eating food with those we use in other experiences as 'knowledge' and 'experiences'.

When we cannot have enough food, we feel hunger or thirst, and this is conceptualised in the metaphors 'desire is hunger/thirst', and 'satisfying desire is eating'. In this connection, a very interesting example in Persian is the term *lah-lah zadan* which means 'to pant' (e.g. like a dog from thirst, etc.), and metaphorically, it is applied to reflect a thirst and hunger to get the awareness of intellection or emotion.

Therefore, the focus of the expression *lah-lah zadan* for X would not be on physical thirst or hunger, but a strong mental longing and desire for something (e.g. knowledge, information, ideas, love or sexual interaction) as shown in the following expression:

(16) *del-am barāye dunestan-e*
xabar-hā

heart-POSS-1SG for understanding-GEN
news-PL

lah lah mizane.

panting panting PROG-hit-3SG

My heart is panting for knowing the news.

'I am very eager to know the news.'

The metaphor is understood as a strong desire to discover the news, and here we have a metaphor interacting with a metonymic mapping. The 'container' image-schema of *del* 'heart' (part) stands for the person (whole). The compound Verb construction *lah-lah zadan* is mapped onto strong want and longing to discover or understand X. The understanding of this expression needs an activation of an image-schematic structure in which the part-whole schema highlights the relationship between the source and target domains.

On the other hand, the image schema of unfavourable, disgusting or indigestible food which results in difficulty in the swallowing or digesting may be mapped as the 'thought' domain, reflecting a struggle for understanding or accepting the ideas and thoughts in mind.

(17) *sa'i kardam hame-ye harf-hā-ye*
kezb-eš ro
 try do-PST-1SG all-GEN word-PL-GEN
lie-POSS-3SG ACC foru bexor-am vali
ta modat-hā sar-e
 down eat-1SG but till time-PL
 head-GEN
del-am mānde bud
 stomach-POSS-1SG stay-PST
 I tried to swallow all his false words, but they had
 stood on my heart for a
 long time.
 'I tried to swallow all his lies, but I couldn't forget
 them for a long time.'

The above mixed metaphorical expression reflects an overloading pressure on stomach *sar-e del māndan* 'to be troubled with ingestion' when there is difficulty swallowing (*foru- xordan*) and digesting more food. In the same way, incomprehensible information or news may create an overload of pressure for the mind, and this gives rise to the metaphor 'an overload of pressure on the mind is an overload of pressure on the stomach'.

On the other hand, the concept of destruction and elimination can also be served as a target domain by the act of swallowing as a source image, though there is no reference of mastication (biting and chewing) in this eating process. Swallowing makes food inaccessible as the visible substances (from outside the body) become invisible (inside the body), conceptualising the sudden removal and enclosure of an entity. The concept of X is swallowed by Y is illustrated in the following Persian expression.

(18) *kāš zamin dahan bāz kone,*
 Wishing ground mouth open do-3SG,
man ro foru bede
 I ACC down give-3SG
 I wish the ground opens its mouth and swallows me.
 'I wish the ground would swallow me up/ I wish I
 could hide from memories.'

The above example is a metaphorical personification of the 'ground' used as a metonymic concept suggesting a part (mouth) to stand for a whole (person). It imputes the human physical ability of ingestion, where the human functions as eater (a strong agentive subject) swallowing (*foru dādan*) the memories of the past that need to be hidden away, thus conceptualising the metaphor 'swallowing is hiding'.

Persuading is eating.

(19) *bā dāstān-hā-ye bi-mani-š maqzam*
 with story-PL-GEN without-meaning-POSS-
 3SG brain-POSS-1SG
ro xor-d
 ACC eat-PST-3SG
 He ate my brain with his meaningless stories.
 'Telling meaningless stories, he made me upset.'

In Persian, the meaning of light as a verb *xordan* may be extended to indicate the concepts of both 'overcoming' (by a strong agent) and 'undergoing torment' (by an affected object) in both the intellectual and emotional domains as it is with 'eating someone's head or brain'. The related metaphoric expressions, therefore, indicate that someone (an agent) can eat another person's 'head' or 'brain' to irritate or upset the latter. It seems in Persian, when

offended, one ‘uses’ another person’s head/brain to force him to experience a sort of psychological torment in destroying his intellectual or emotional ‘container’ or ‘contents’.

The examples cited above and so many other metaphorical themes present our daily concepts of ideas/thought referred to as metaphors we use in our own culture. It is also a way other cultures conceptualise thought using food as the source domain. In fact, food processing in the body is assimilated as internalising the ideas or mentally absorbing notions across many related and unrelated languages and cultures. Nevertheless, some metaphor conceptualisations in Persian like *maqz-am ro xord*, ‘he ate my brain’, do not seem to be meaningful in other languages when translated literally.

CONCLUSION

The most salient factor that is still disregarded in conceptual metaphor studies is cultural cognition or em-minded cultural accounts that are rooted in a nation’s worldviews, belief systems, traditions, habits and even linguistic systems, which have constructed and reconstructed thought and speech over time. In fact, while metaphors mostly are motivated and mediated based on physiological embodiment, no one metaphor can be viewed as culture-free; metaphors are a manifestation of cultural models comprising embodiment, cultural em-mindedness and the interplay of both. With this distinction in mind, it can be concluded that metaphor universalities mostly are the result of the

same experiential embodied accounts, which are constructed under motivation of a similar cultural em-mindedness. The variations in the em-minded cultural elements, on the other hand, may cause a completely different conceptualisation or a different understanding and reasoning of the same physiological experience, which leads to variations in the meanings of the same conceptual metaphor in the same mapping. Thus, this study shows a clearer image of the interaction between the human body, mind and particular cultural norms in the conceptualisations of metaphoric themes of ‘thinking’ in the source domain of the acts of ‘food’ and ‘eating’ in Persian.

Under the principles of mapping from the source domain of ‘food’ and ‘eating’ to the abstract domain of ‘ideas’ and ‘thought’, the prominent features of the source domain used are food ‘ingredients’, ‘flavour’, ‘preparation’ and ‘digestion’, which are mapped respectively to the target domain of ‘thought’ as its ‘content’, ‘quality’, ‘production’ and ‘comprehension’. As the linguistic instances in this study show, among the identified proposition-schemas for ‘thought as food’, those related to ‘food preparation’ and ‘food digestion’ seem to be the most abundant and productive. Moreover, it has been revealed that some particular features of ‘food’ as the source domain have been more salient and likely to be used as mapping concepts in Persian. It is noteworthy to say that not all metaphorical expressions introduced in the corpus data fit exactly into the suggested framework. Conceptual mapping is in fact a very

complex cognitive process that requires multi-facet conceptualisations in order to construe the metaphors of the ‘thought as food’ concept.

This study, therefore, shows that variations in the linguistic metaphorical themes may have resulted from the specific proposition-schemas for the mapping conceptualisations. The identified models enable us to demarcate the em-minded cultural models as well as cross-cultural commonalities and diversities in the way we think and speak. The ontological metaphoric extensions of food and cognition in Persian are, thus, to a great extent mediated and motivated by embodied experiences as well as socio-cultural orientation, Iranian traditional medicine and the spiritual tradition of Sufism, as shown in the marginal role the Persian language plays in the rational-irrational dichotomy. For instance, the ad hoc evidence inferred from the metaphorical conceptual mappings of *del* ‘heart/stomach’ as a container in Persian is very likely originated from em-minded cultural models i.e. motivated from Iranians’ ethno-medical traditions and the spiritual worldviews of Sufism.

REFERENCES

- Avicenna (Abu Ali Sina), M. (1930). *A treatise on the canon of medicine of Avicenna*. Incorporating a translation of the first book. by O. C a m e r o n Gruner . London.
- Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I. (2012). The importance of unveiling conceptual metaphors in a minority language: The case of Basque. In A. Idström, & E. Piirainen (Eds.). *Endangered Metaphors*, pp. 253–274. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Khajeh, Z., & Imran-Ho, A. (2012). *Persian culinary metaphors: A cross-cultural conceptualization*. GEMA: *Online Journal of Language Studies*, 12 (1), 69-87. ISSN 1675-8021
- Khajeh, Z., Imran-Ho, A., & Tan, K. H. (2013a). Emotional temperament in food-related metaphors: A cross-cultural account of the conceptualizations of ‘sadness’. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 2 (6), 54-62. ISSN 2200-3592, ISSN 2200-3452.
- Khajeh, Z., Imran-Ho, A., & Tan, K.H. (2013b). The metaphoric concept of *xordan* ‘to eat’ in Persian. *Asian Social Science*, 9 (15), 115-129. ISSN 1911-2017, E-ISSN 1911-2025.
- Kovecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor. A practical introduction*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture: Universality and variation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kövecses, Z. (2008). The conceptual structure of happiness and pain. In C. A. Lascaratou, A. Despotopoulou, & E. Ifantidou (Eds.). *Reconstructing pain and joy: Linguistic, literary, and cultural perspectives* (pp. 17-34). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kovecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh*. New York: Basic Books.

- Lakoff, G., & Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Reddy, M. J. (1979). The conduit metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.). *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 284-324). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sharifan, F., Dirven, R., Yu, N., & Niemeier, S. (2008). *Culture, body, and language: Conceptualizations of internal body organs across cultures and languages*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Su, L. I-W . (2002). What can metaphors tell us about culture? *Language and Linguistics*, 3(3): 589-613.

