

## Persian Culinary Metaphors: A Cross-cultural Conceptualization

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### Abstract

Studies concerning the metaphorical use of language deal with metaphorical units from two particular perspectives: a mapping from one cognitive domain to another domain, and a grounding of the mapping as a reflection within image schema. The present study demonstrates the pervasiveness of culinary metaphors in Persian social and cultural interaction hypothesizing that related food metaphors may single out the unique status of eating/food in Persian culture and society. Investigating the metaphorical conceptualization of “THOUGHT AS FOOD”, TEMPERAMENT AS FOOD, and LUST AS FOOD within the MIND IS BODY concept is primarily based on the assumption that thought, human disposition, and sexual desires are in fact closely interrelated. Utilizing a particular conceptual metaphor model (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Ahrens, 2002) the image schema and proposition schema of related food metaphors are investigated in order to analyze cultural variations across Persian and English. The researchers suggest that cultural cognition which is distributed across the minds in a cultural group plays a key role as the source of cross-cultural variations.

**Keywords:** mapping, cultural conceptualization, cultural cognition, image schema, proposition schema.

### Introduction

Since George Lakoff and Mark Johnson first introduced the Conceptual Metaphor Theory in their *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), an extensive debate has manifested itself in cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology. The book has become the icon of a new perspective of metaphor analysis, in which metaphors are no longer considered as just dispensable ornaments of language in poetic and rhetorical dimensions, but have cognitive significance and that in most cases they cannot be substituted by any form of literal language. Since then, metaphors are studied as examples of figurative language by which words extended, and extra features over referential aspects are gained.

Cognitive linguistic studies have introduced metaphor as a crucial aspect of human cognition and metaphorical language is often part and parcel of authentic situations of life. Metaphors not only mirror the conceptual system, but they shape the cultural models of a certain community (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The conceptual metaphors are indicated in language and language in turn serves as a basic indicator of these conceptualizations. Although the use of metaphor is universal in all languages and cultures, i.e., its use is not “culture exclusive”, its choice to carry the realities seems to be “culture specific” (Liu, 2002). While the conceptualizations play an essential role in expressing daily realities of life, language speakers do not usually have conscious awareness of these systems, the way they think or act seems to show an automatic procedure along a specific embedded conceptualization. As metaphors are figurative usage of language which are pervasive in everyday speech and in every kind of discourse, and that they both reflect and shape our conceptual systems based on what we think and consequently how we act (Liu, 2002), people’s shared ideas, beliefs, and dispositions can be investigated and revealed through careful study of the metaphorical linguistic expressions within a specific culture.

According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the metaphorical expressions used in a language reflect the metaphorical understandings that language speakers have of different experiences. In this view, metaphor conceptualizations are projections of conceptual structures which reside in speakers’ cognition in a manner that enables them to comprehend certain abstract experiences in terms of more concrete ones. It is this systematic nature of certain metaphorical projections that allows people to think, act, reason, and speak about physical experiences. Adopting an experientialist notion of interpreting metaphorical expressions cognitively as a cross-domain mapping from a source (more delineated) domain to the target (less delineated) domain (Lakoff, 1990), the present research explores how metaphorical constituents reflect various cognitive and cultural models by investigating the metaphorical conceptualizations of IDEAS/THOUGHT AS FOOD, TEMPERAMENT AS FOOD, and SEXUAL LUST AS FOOD in current Persian language.

The following section will provide the background to the study by explaining how metaphorical concepts available to language users are filtered by the norms, values, traditions, and belief systems prevailing in a particular cultural atmosphere. It is then followed by an explication of the fundamental notion of cultural conceptualization and the related sub-configuration to show the relationship between metaphoric concepts, culture, and cultural models that are significant to this study.

### **Background of Study**

The cross-cultural study of metaphors with respect to a cognitive linguistic approach originating from Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) insights has brought together two opposed approaches. On the one hand are those Lakoffian linguists greatly affected by the commonalities of generic or primary metaphorical concepts as MORE IS UP, TIME MOVES, LIFE IS A JOURNEY through which our conceptualizations about quality, time, and life are structured. These metaphors are assumed to stem from a mutual relation

in embodied experience of all human beings. Based on this insight, humans can only form concepts through his body. In other words, every understanding of the world, ourselves and others can only be formed in terms of the concepts shaped by our bodily experiences. As is well documented by Sweetser (1999) and as the data taken from different languages reveal, more intangible, abstract concepts can be demonstrated based on the more concrete, substantial ones. For this, there is frequent use of certain body organs as a metaphorical source domain across a variety of languages in the world since the body parts are the most familiar entities recognized in human personal cosmos.

There are on the other hand, some other scholars who have not totally relied on the universality of basic primary metaphor conceptualizations. Their methodological priority is mainly grounded in culturally-specific models. Their claim is that the cultural models and cultural cognition impose much more influence on the metaphorical linguistic expressions in language varieties (Sharifian, Dirven, Yu, & Niemeier, 2008). Thus, the advocators of this camp fully stress the cultural and cognitive motives as the mediators of physiological and internal experiences (e.g., Kovecses, 2002).

In his recent work, Kovecses (2005) tries to reconcile these two opposing views. Whilst bearing in mind vast cultural variations, he acknowledges that certain universally-based embodiment experiences of human beings oblige the existential metaphor conceptualization in that it leads to the incorporation of a basis for culturally-determined metaphorical expressions. For him, the universal human embodied experience acts as *constraining* what metaphors might come into view. Instead of universality, Kovecses (2005) elucidates that the uniformity in the complex metaphors resulted from a natural emergence of some “universal correlations in bodily expressions” (p. 38). He further proposes some culturally-specific instantiations under the topic of causes of variation in metaphor conceptualization as “differential experiences” (2005, p. 293) of human beings, both personal and historical, and “differential cognitive process”.

These culturally-generated ways of conceptualizing experience are referred to as “cultural conceptualizations” by Sharifian (2003; 2011). As he indicates, the emergence of these cultural concepts is through the specific interactions between the members of a particular culturally-bound group and is continuously negotiated across time and space in authentic situations of life. The native speakers’ conceptualizations across different cultural groups are widely related to their specific manner of thought and attitude and in turn they will lend themselves to norms, beliefs, customs, values and traditions or, as Imran (2011) and Imran and Ruzy Suliza Hashim (2009) report, the different ethnic groups of people might be predisposed to manifest certain conceptual metaphorisations in particular ethnocentric aspects.

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 has a pervasive use in a variety of cultures and languages as a concrete source domain mapping ideas/thought, virtue, attitude, human temperament, and sexual desire as target domains. This study thus explores how metaphors mirror different cultural cognition and cultural models through investigating the conceptual metaphors of

IDEAS, TEMPERAMENT and LUST AS FOOD in current Persian. It is hypothesized that various proposition-schemas will be at work in Persian speakers' conceptualization. There are a number of lexical items and phrasal expressions in Farsi that instantiate the socio-cultural aspects of Persian, the words that "are particularly important and revealing in a given culture" (Wierzbika, 1996, p. 15), and are adapted to clothe a specific system of conceptualization, the ones that evolve and change throughout the history of their existence and which Persians have associated with metaphors that have been ingrained in their belief systems, including their specific worldview. In other words, these cultural key words seem to be the labels for the core cultural conceptualizations which identify the cultural cognition of a group of people.

FOOD/EATING concepts provide us with a conceptual basis for illustrating a relatively large amount of metaphor conceptualizations in Farsi. Thus, focusing on the food-related metaphors of IDEAS, TEMPERAMENT, and LUST domains in Persian, this study aims to examine the relationship between these culinary concepts and Persian culture, as well as how these expressions influence the targeted speakers' beliefs, ideas, and dispositions. With respect to the alterations in life experiences like some other culturally-bounded variations (Liu, 2002; Kovecses, 2006), it is expected that the choice of specific food-related metaphors for manifesting the realities of life vary culturally as well.

Most words and metaphorical expressions in a certain language can be analyzed into innumerable semantic markers, and the number of potential metaphor conceptualizations on the basis of similarity is really unlimited. It is not to deny that there are always metaphorical equivalents across languages and cultures, i.e. there is always cultural overlapping. However, the question at this juncture is how many of these metaphoric instances exist among human languages? There are of course very few expressions with similar mapping conditions. The essential point is that the instances of overlapping of metaphors in different languages "are not concrete manifestations of some pre-existing universal conceptual metaphors; rather, they are the results of arbitrary pairing of a metaphorical signifier and a metaphorical signified that happen to be identical or similar across two languages" (Ding, 2009, p. 55). The motives for metaphorical disparity are many, but the most essential one comes from the fact that in all languages, innumerable cultural units exist to the metaphor users, each consisting of a huge amount of semantic components to shed light on various aspects of social life. The eventually chosen cultural unit as a metaphorical vehicle for a specific life situation in a particular language community is arbitrarily decided and therefore unpredictable.

### **Culture, Cultural Model, and Metaphor**

Language is a part of culture and the cross cultural study of metaphors seems to be one of the most stimulating fields to cognitive linguistics researchers. Cultural models, moreover, are those shared understandings between people in a particular community that organize and moderate their experience and behaviour providing them with a certain framework for the interpretation of everyday realities. According to anthropologists, such models play a prominent role in human beings' thought and reasoning and that speakers' metaphor usage is highly constrained by these pre-existing cultural understandings.

The position that Sharifian et al. (2008) have adopted in their paper *Culture and Language: Looking for the mind inside the body* emphasize cultural models as complex conceptual systems acting as building blocks of a “cultural group’s cultural cognition” (p. 12). They further maintain that the cultural models provide the members of a certain cultural group with “templates” for comprehending particular dimensions of their lives. First, the locus of this conceptual system may be developed by one individual, but then it may become an essential part of the cultural cognition of a cultural group, but with the passage of time, its origin may not be remembered by succeeding generations. In this case, the dividing line between the original conceptual systems and the metaphorical systems arising from them would be highly arbitrary. Regarding this notion, if we view the internalized systems of our conceptualization as specific cultural models, then we can trace the metaphors in certain cultural models rather than just reflect on these models.

### **Cultural Conceptualization**

The term ‘conceptualization’ refers to the result of basic perceptual and conceptual configurations of the human cognitive system. Human beings’ conceptualization is based on multi-faceted dimensions through which our conceptual faculties derive from a variety of experience sources consisting of body, environment, as well as our particular culture that give birth to as well as recognize our new experiences. Further, culture experience, also known as ‘world view’, provides a human being with a framework for his conceptualization and it may direct and construe the way he conceptualizes his body and/or environment (Driven et al., 2003). Cultural conceptualization captures a variety of sub-configurations of cognitive repertoire used by human beings brought together from basic perceptual processes; the ones for the purpose of this study are treated in more detail.

### **Conceptual Structure**

As mentioned before, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) treat metaphors as conventionalized cognitive structures, involving a mapping process from a source semantic domain to a target one. Moreover, as advocated in the Lakoffian theoretical framework of dealing with metaphors, human conceptual structure is characterized as “experiential knowledge domain” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 240). A domain is considered to be an experiential gestalt, that is, “a multi-dimensional structured whole arising naturally from experience” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 82). On the other hand, any one of the domains is a dimension of experiential knowledge which highlights particular angles of the related concepts in that domain. According to this framework of metaphor studies, metaphorical concepts are basically designed by means of a mapping relation between a concrete domain and an abstract one. The mapping is said to be between the whole domain and not just individual conceptualizations.

### **Image-schema**

Johnson (1987) asserts that image schema provides us with structures for particular conceptualizations and Palmer (1996) regards them as “schemas of intermediate abstractions [between mental images and abstract propositions] that are readily imagined, perhaps as iconic images, and clearly related to physical (embodied) or social experiences” (p. 66). For instance, as Johnson (1987) reports, when talking about “the foundations of our nation” (p. 105-106) people usually draw the image schema of “building” to manifest the conceptualization of “nation”. In Persian, *soxanān-e talx-e u az galum pāin nemire* (literally as ‘his bitter words do not go down my throat’) implies mapping of the image schema of “eating process” onto the domain of “speaking words”.

### **Proposition-schema**

This notion of schema comes from Hutchins (1980) indicating that a proposition-schema is a “template” from which any number of propositions can be structured. Quinn (1991) defined them as abstractions acting as models of thought and behaviour, they specify “concepts and the relations which hold among them” (Quinn and Holland, 1987, p. 25). The proposition schemas can also construct a frame for certain conceptualizations in a particular culture. Thus these may in fact provide a basis for a variety of patterns of thinking, reasoning, and behaviour across particular cultural groups. For instance, food related ideas, disposition, and sex metaphors used by Persian speakers often embody proposition schemas that seem to reflect Iranian culture and their specific world view. In order to uncover the logic behind this kind of reasoning, the involved metaphors may be decoded to reveal the related proposition schemas underlying them. Moreover, in casual realities, complex schema may be constructed through conjoining certain propositions which in turn will reveal a highly shared understanding of how a particular conceptualization works in that certain culture under study.

### **Data and Methodology**

The present study adopts the basic tenet of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980)—that we conceptualize most abstract domains in terms of those which are relatively better comprehended in our physical and cultural environment of daily life. In *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), Lakoff and Johnson discuss how metaphor involves cross-domain mapping through which the source or more delineated domain will be mapped onto the target or less delineated domain, manifesting an experientially grounded metaphorical mapping. Owing to the importance of food/eating in our daily life as a particular source of sustenance and enjoyment, involving the process of intake, swallowing, and digestion, it is likely that the food/eating concept is widely applied in different related or unrelated cultures, and languages as a source concrete domain reflecting ideas, dispositions, and sexual desires of humans. A purely physical aspect of eating is the nourishment it provides for the body, and we generally eat to get a pleasant agreeable taste, and avoid food with non-enjoyable gustation, or as Newman (1997, p. 215) emphasizes, “there is an experiential bias towards enjoyable gustation”.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1999) assert, the mind can be conceptualized in bodily domains, a well-functioning mind as a healthy body, just as body needing the right kind and content of nutrition, appetizing and healthful material, so the mind will search for the right kind and amount of ideas. The related ideas can be the general human thinking system of ideas itself, human disposition and virtue, and sexual matters or lust. Within the primary conceptual metaphor THE MIND IS BODY, Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 241) direct our attention to the conceptual metaphor of Acquiring Ideas as Eating in which the mind is conceptualized in terms of the body.

### **Identification and selection of food-related metaphors**

To carry out a systematic analysis of food related metaphors in Persian and English, the researcher will begin with documented material, both printed and on-line databases of Persian and English metaphors from a variety of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and some other lexicographical works such as dictionaries of idiomatic metaphorical expressions and thesauri, actual discourse, and native speakers' intuition as corpus data. The basis for choosing the related copies is that they contain a good repertoire of the examples with contexts in which they occur, an important issue in appreciating the effect of metaphorical usage of a certain language. It is worth mentioning that no set is ever comprehensive enough, since the new forms of chunks are always possible. The discussion here will be in terms of searching for the broad categories of concept of EAT rather than the specific verb "eat".

### **Procedure and heuristics of analysis**

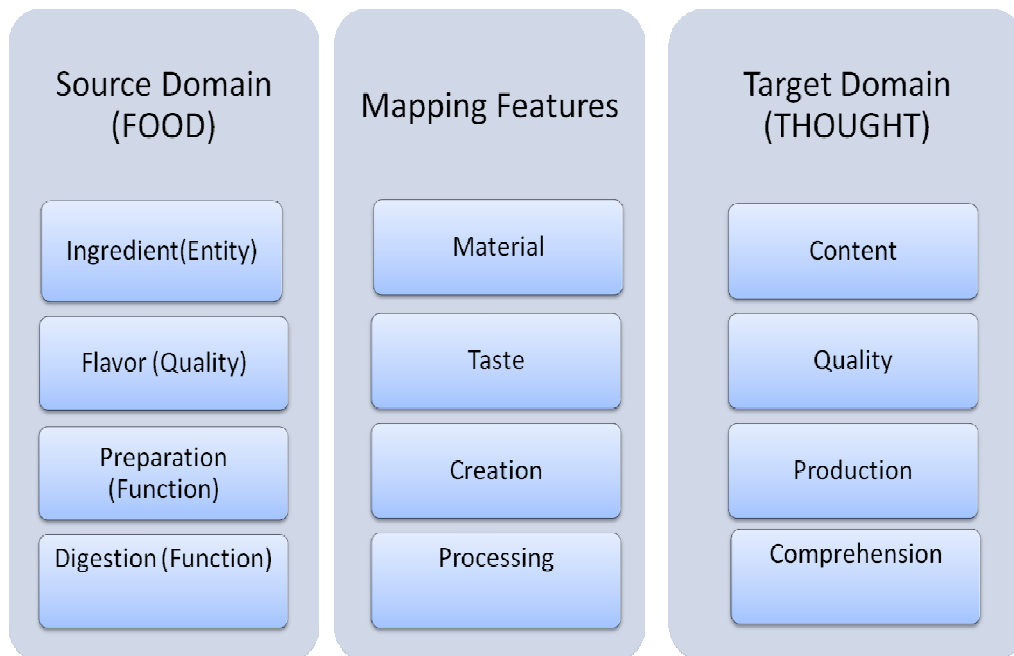
The present research is a qualitative study investigating culinary metaphor conceptualization through which the researcher will examine the data, interpret and form an impression. Ultimately, the findings will be presented in a structured manner. For the theoretical framework, this research will apply the Lakoffian Contemporary Theory of Metaphors (1980, 1999) for the analysis of Persian food related metaphorical concepts of IDEAS/TEMPERAMENT/LUST within its most crucial notions as "conceptual mapping", "image schema", and "proposition schema". In addition, Ahrens's (2002) Conceptual Mapping Model (CM model) will be used; the metaphorical expressions are analysed in terms of the 'entities', 'qualities', and 'functions' which are mapped between certain source and target domains, and then an underlying motivation for these reflections are postulated. Considering food as a source domain, the CM model will be used to map to the different domains of IDEAS, TEMPERAMENT and LUST in Persian language.

Thus, on the basis of the proposed source domain of food, the linguistic metaphorical expressions are generated and then are grouped according to their commonalities of their target domains of ideas, disposition, and sex. Next, we seek to answer some significant questions regarding what we know about the source domain, food, in terms of the real world knowledge which is considered to be conceptual. The related questions and the real world knowledge concerning food as the source domain are:

1. What entities does the source domain (food) have?  
Essence/ingredients
2. What qualities does the source domain (food) have?  
Flavour/tast
3. What does the source domain (food) do?  
Preparation/digestion

The metaphorical expressions collected are then analyzed for image schematic correspondences regarding the source and target domains. These identified actual mappings will be a subset of the correspondences that manifest themselves in the real world. After analyzing the conceptual metaphors in this way, a mapping principle (particular proposition schema) for ideas, temperament, and lust in Persian will be postulated. The following table is an example of conceptual mapping of THOUGHT AS FOOD in Persian organized based on Ahrens's CM model.

Table 1: Mapping of FOOD and THOUGHT



Through analyzing the image schemas that map for a particular metaphor conceptualization, it will be possible to identify the basic reason why a certain target (idea, temperament, and lust) has selected a particular source domain (food). Based on the identified real world knowledge, for each example, we analyze linguistic metaphorical expressions that are the image schematic correspondences between each source-target domain pairing, searching for related entities, qualities, and functions. Then, an analysis of the underlying mapping principle for each metaphor conceptualization is provided. With respect to this analysis, as Su (2002) points out for example, the identified **ingredients** of food, **flavor** of food, **preparation** of food, and **digestion** of food are subsequently mapped conceptually into the some certain aspects of



thought domain as **content**, **quality**, **production**, and **comprehension** through which a certain proposition-schema can be postulated for each pairing. The mapping of source domain FOOD and the related target domains are roughly presented in Figure 1:

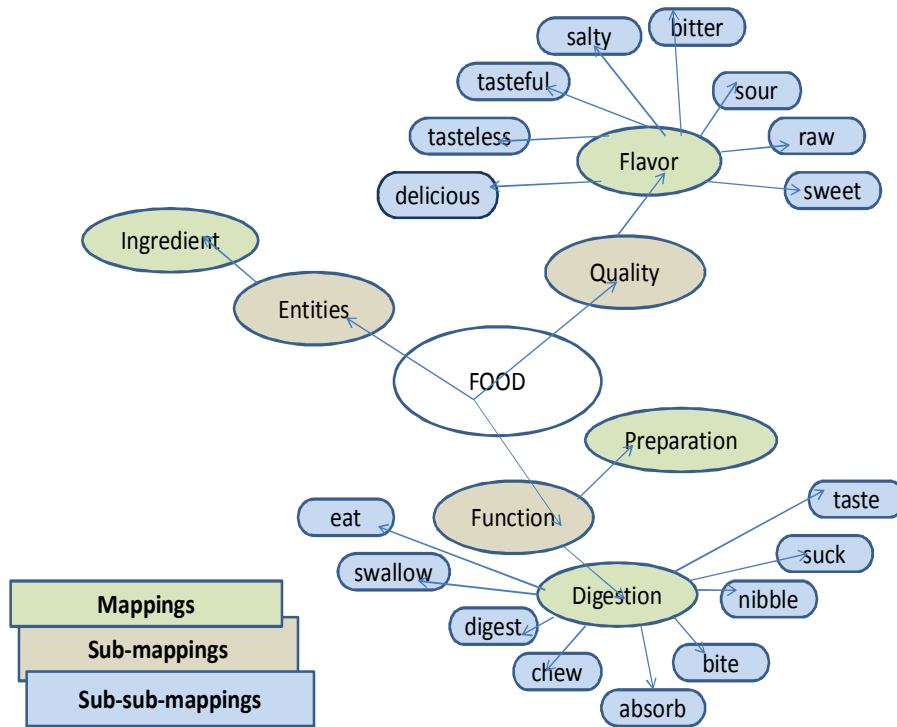


Figure 1: Mapping of source domain FOOD and related target domains

### Proposition-schemas in the Conceptualization of ‘THOUGHT IS FOOD’ Metaphor

To illustrate the heuristic procedures used in the analysis which is conducted on the basis of image-schema, the proposed proposition-schema for the metaphor conceptualization of THOUGHT AS FOOD will be introduced in the section below.

Grammatical abbreviations used in metaphor to metaphor translations are: ACC= accusative/object marker, GEN= genitive/possession, INF= infinitive, PAST-P= past-participle, PL= plural, POSS= possessive, PROG= progressive.

#### The content of thought is the ingredient of food

In Persian, speakers often encounter such metaphorical expressions as:

(1) *goft- e- hā -š por o peymān ast*

Speak- GEN-PL-POSS.3SG- full and scale is

‘His speech is very informative’ (has much ingredient)

(2) *bi- māye fatir-e*

NEG- material azymic is

‘His words/thought are not informative’ (without ingredient)

The above sentences use the terms *por-o peymān* (has 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 here conceptualized as the content of thought /knowledge/ language through the use of metaphorical concepts of the word, originally taken from the ingredients of food.

### The quality of thought is the flavour of food

In Persian, there exist metaphorical expressions using the flavour of food to describe the quality of thought as in:

(3) *harf- hā-š širin- e / talx-e /xām-e/na-poxte ast/bā-maze ast/bi-maze ast*

Word-PL-POSS.3SG sweet is/bitter is/raw is/uncooked is/tasteful is/tasteless is

‘His words are sweet/bitter/raw/uncooked/tasteful/tasteless.’

(4) *ādam- e xām-i/ poxte-i ast*

Person-GEN raw is/cooked is

‘He is inexperienced/knowledgeable and experienced.’

In English, there are the same expressions of ‘sweet thought’ or ‘bitter thought’ using the flavour of food to illustrate the quality of thought through using certain modifiers. These expressions show that the food flavour is metaphorically transferred to the thought quality. The examples show that a variety of flavours of food domains are metaphorically extended to qualify ideas and thoughts in Persian, while some are metaphorically applied to modify spoken words (sweet, bitter, raw, uncooked), some are specifically used to modify the degree of how knowledgeable speakers are (raw, cooked). Consequently, what is mapped in the target domain of thought can be either general concepts or specific ideas.

Generally speaking, it is expected that sweet, tasty food is consistently utilized in most cultures to refer to positive and pleasant mental qualities, bearing the general schema as SWEETNESS IS PERCEIVED AS POSITIVE; nevertheless, there would be specific metaphor instantiations shedding light on the underlying cultural differences. In Persian, for example, the metaphorical expression *širin aql* ‘sweet mind’ conveys the **stupidity** attribute with the negative connotation among native speakers of Farsi language 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, that it was considered sweet, but with a negative effect on the minds of the consumers, who had to consume it during famine and war.

### The formation of thought is the preparation of food

The proposition schema here illustrates the formation of our thought which is conceptualized as the preparation of food as in:

(5) *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.’

Here the sentence means that he decorates his speech with pompous or inflated words to convince others to agree with him.

(6) *ideh-hā- ye jadidi dar zehn- aš dar hāl- e qavām āmad-an-e*

Idea-PL-GEN new in mind-POSS.3SG in now-GEN thickening come-INF is

‘A new idea is thickening in his mind.’

The expression *qavām āmadan* (thickening/ make dense) in Persian is used in the culinary domain to show that food is prepared and formed in a good quality, but in the sentence above, it is metaphorically employed to describe the formation of a new idea or proposal of a new concept i.e. metaphorical conceptualization of this expression in Persian culinary lexicon is used to describe this notional transfer from the source domain (food) onto the target domain (thought). In other words, the process involved in the production of new concepts in speech and mind is analogous with the formation and preparation of food.

### The comprehension of thought is the digestion of food

There are verbs in Persian that connote the process of digestion (comprehension/understanding) as a metaphorical conceptualization of the COMPREHENSION OF THOUGHT IS THE DIGESTION OF FOOD. Digestion refers to the act of assimilating food in a form that can be absorbed and utilized by the body.

(7) *moratab harf-hā -š ro dar zehn- aš nošxār mi- kon-e*

Always word-PL-POSS.3SG ACC in mind-POSS.3SG rumination PROG-do-3SG

‘He always ruminates his words in the mind.’

*Nošxār kardan* (rumination), a compound verb in which the nominal element *nošxār* consists of *noš* (drinking)+*xār* (eating) literally is used as a particular way of food digestion by cows, but here in Persian, it is metaphorically applied in this example referring to the re-digestion of knowledge, speech or thought in general. It implies the digestion of something taken in before again and again forming the concept of The COMPREHENSION OF THOUGHT IS THE DIGESTION OF FOOD.

This type of conceptual mapping as the data in both Persian and English shows can be expressed by a variety of verbs as *xordan* (eating), *balidan* (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 the processing and understanding knowledge in a general sense. THOUGHT used here can be either abstract as 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 we live by in our own culture. It is also a way other cultures conceptualize thought using food as the source domain. In fact, food processing in the body is likened to internalizing the ideas or mentally absorbing the notions across many related or/and unrelated languages and cultures.

### The mapping of food and human temperament

Human beings' disposition, feeling, mentality and attitude are also experienced in culinary concepts cross-culturally. That is due to the fact that a human being's mental status is not tangible nor directly accessible to their comprehension, thus, it needs to be experienced in terms of some other concrete, more accessible concepts. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) offer Interesting, Pleasurable Ideas Are Appetizing Food, and Uninteresting Ideas Are Flavourless Food. Thus it will be expected that many sweet, tasty foods are conceptualized with good disposition and positive mental qualities which gives rise to the conceptual metaphor GOOD TEMPERAMENT IS SWEET/TASTY. In Persian, for instance, a variety of food types and tastes are applied to the human disposition for either positive or negative evaluation of feelings, mental states, and values. The metaphorical expression "sweet tongue", e.g. designates a good-tempered person who does not show his anger.

(8) *bačē- ye širin zabān-iye*

Child-GEN sweet tongue is  
'That's a sweet tongue child.'

(9) *harf- hā- š xeili bā namak-e*

Word-PL-POSS.3SG much with salt is  
'His words are so tasty.'

On the other hand, if tasty, sweet, delicious foods are employed to illustrate positive mental states, foods with tasteless, sour, bitter taste are systematically applied to evaluate negative, unfavourable characters with ill-tempered personality and behaviour, illustrating the conceptual metaphor BAD TEMPERAMENT IS SOUR/UNSWEET.

(10) *kolan ādam- e gušt talx-iye*

Generally person-GEN meat bitter is  
'He is generally a man of bitter meat.'

(11) *češm- aš šur-e*

Eye-POSS.3SG salty is  
'He has an evil eye.'

The natural cognitive system displays conceptual/linguistic commonalities, basically in the realm of basic tastes of sweetness and bitterness. However, the related taste qualities are not always the same to all human beings, varying from individual to individual, and across different cultures. The expressions evil eye and *češ-e šur* (salty eye) in English and Persian are both believed to bring injury or bad fortune to the person at whom it has been directed for reasons of envy, hatred and dislike. However, the idea fully demonstrates a specific cultural conceptualization in the application of the taste 'salty' among Persian speakers conveying the concept of envy or ill-will using the taste 'salty' with eyes. On the other hand, different cultures have variously regarded salt as a symbol

of purity, divinity, hospitality, welcome and wisdom. Expressions such as ‘worth his salt’, ‘the salt of life’, and ‘loyal to one’s salt’ are common in everyday life. Metaphors as *namak b-harām* (ungrateful) and *namak nashnās* (thankless) illustrate a cultural/social belief about the significance and value of *namak* (salt) concept in Persian. In Persian wedding traditions and customs, the couples are first provided with salt as a symbol of protection for their lives against the evil eye (to blind the evil eye), and in witchcraft originating from Zoroastrian beliefs and culture, it was used to drive away evil spirits. Moreover, the smell of raw or cooked food can be a source domain giving birth to a large number of metaphorical expressions characterizing human disposition. It is very common in Persian culture to conceptualize particular states of personality and character using different forms of cooked food.

(12) *pyāz- e bu ghandu!*

Onion-GEN smelling rotten

‘You! Rotten onion.’

(13) *āš- e dahān suzi nist*

Soup-GEN mouth burning NEG is

‘It is not so hot (you won’t miss so much).’

On the other hand, the shape or degree of food cooking may form some metaphor conceptualizations.

(14) *mesl- e hendevāne- ye / anār- e dar- baste ast*

Like-GEN watermelon-GEN / pomegranate-GEN door closed is

‘He is such a person with blurred feeling’ (nobody knows what is inside, unless it is opened.)’

(15) *bā harf- hā- š man rā xām kard*

With word-PL-POSS.3SG I ACC raw did.3SG

‘His words threw me a curve (he deceived me/ led me on).’

These examples bring together a sample of systematic conceptual metaphors representing conceptual metaphor TEMPERAMENT IS FOOD. Thus, food aspects- taste, smell, shape and cooking traditions and styles - can be a source/concrete domain through which the native speakers partially comprehend certain aspects of the target/abstract domain of human disposition and virtue. Metaphors of this kind illustrate the function of being vivid rather than using a roundabout way of speaking.

### **The mapping of food and lust**

Some specific kinds of culinary metaphors are basically applied in slang and in the context of sexual domains and physical beauty. Such metaphorical units, on the other hand, may be used with a minor purpose in terms of endearment. It would not be difficult to explain why most languages utilize eating metaphors for sex, comparing humans to food. As Lakoff (1987) explains, (sexual) desire is a sort of appetite whose object is a person, so that a human is considered as food (p. 409).

Relating sex to food, Goatly points out that:

“... if we do not eat we die, whereas, if we have no sex, we simply fail to reproduce and the human race eventually dies. Equating sex with eating might suggest that sex is essential for our life. More obviously, they suggest that the sole purpose of the women is to satisfy the appetites of men, just as food is produced for the sole purpose of eating, with women, like food, passive in this process” (2007, p. 90).

So, the most important motivation for the use of culinary metaphors for the eating act and the target domain sex will be the “schematic isomorphism” (Maalej, 2007) between the eating act and the sex. On the other hand, as he mentions, the set of psychological connections humans have between eating and sex, considering body as a container in both feeding and human reproduction, will be among motivations of this kind, or as Emanatian (1999) puts it, feeding in the mouth maintains life, feeding in the vagina in intercourse produces new life.

Primarily, it is expected that the culinary metaphors of sex, sexuality, and women in particular in Persian language follow the semantic domains of:

1. Prepared food

(16) *un doxtar-e xeili eštehā- āvar- e/ xoš-maza-s/ xordani-ye*  
That girl-GEN much appetite-bringing-is/good-taste-is/edible is  
'She is so appetizing/delicious/edible.'

2. Uncooked food

(17) *mesl-e yek tekke donbe ast*  
Like-GEN one piece fat is  
'She is a piece of fat.'

3. Dessert/fruit

(18) *lab peste- iye/češm bādom-iye*  
Lip pistachio is/ eye almond is  
'Pistachio-lipped/almond-eyed.'

(19) *mesl-e hulu- ye pust kand-e ast*  
Like-GEN peach-GEN skin cut-PCTP is  
'She is a peach.'

Conceptualization of females as prepared food, uncooked food, and dessert/fruit will illustrate ... “the existence of schematic knowledge structures” performing as “a filter, highlighting incoming information which is consistent with the schema, and hiding information that does not fit into the schema” (Allbritton, 1995, p. 38). Thus, highlighting knowledge which is introduced by the source domain and hiding knowledge which is not accessible explicitly in the perception of metaphor results in developing the ideological dimension of metaphor. Women are highlighted as prepared food, which is much better than conceptualizing them as raw food; nevertheless, they are framed as victims, lifeless, and passive in sex. On the other hand, the metaphorical conceptualization of females as uncooked food illustrates them as prey and men as predators suggesting the concept of

MAN AS AN ANIMAL. Most dessert/fruit metaphors convey the conceptualization of sweetness with positive connotations; however, they downgrade females on the scale of being human. As an example (Figure 2), the image schema for the metaphor *hulu- ye pust kand-e* (the peeled peach) in the Persian language will be:

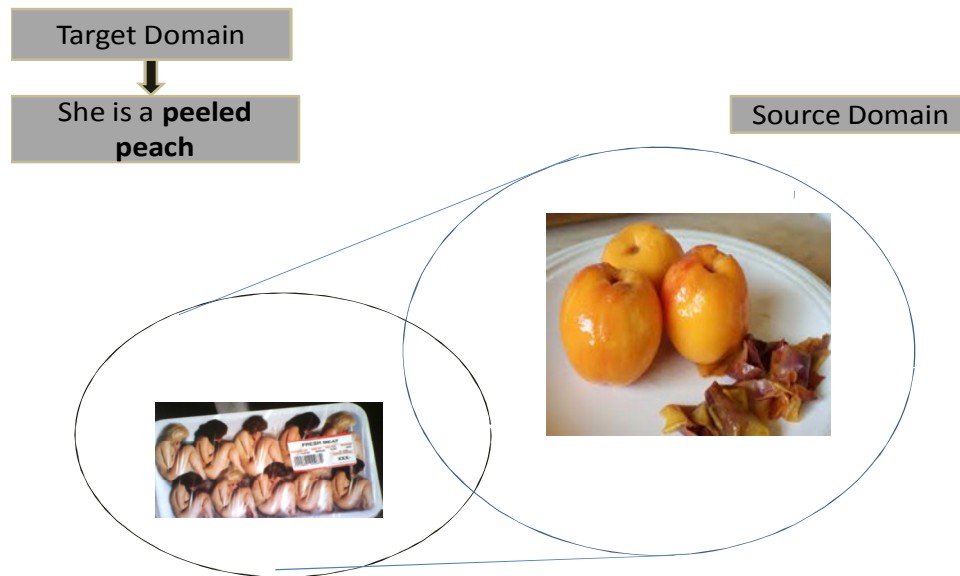


Figure 2: Image schema for the metaphor *hulu- ye pust kand-e* (the peeled peach) in Persian language

The metaphorical sense of the English word 'peach' and the phrase 'peeled peach' in Persian, both stress a sexually attractive female manifesting the conceptual dimension of sex, however, it seems Persian has a specific cultural preference in the use of conceptual thinking about women and lust.

Interestingly, on the other hand, it seems that Persian contains a very low frequency of indecent food metaphors for men. As metaphors are very closely related to our conceptual thinking and reasoning, the obscene metaphors may have gradually influenced people's attitude towards females in Iran, resulting in gender inequality.

### Concluding Remarks

It is assumed that the relationship between ideas, temperament and sexuality and food is worldwide; however, the metaphors of FOOD domain are expected to vary due to cross-cultural differences. It is evident that most of these cross-cultural divergences of metaphor conceptualization occur at the specific level, while similarities can be found at the generic or superordinate level. In other words, metaphorical language would not result merely from certain universal conceptual mappings, but a variety of factors such as language-specific, socio-cultural, and historical realities of a language community would also affect or interfere with these projections.

The evidence shows that the images of culinary and food related metaphors occur extensively in the Persian language indicating their close correlation with Persian culture. They signify the meanings that are connected to Persian culture, myth, folklore, race, identity, religion, spirituality, community, and body as well. . For instance, in Persian, the concept of ‘adversity’ seems to illustrate the possible influence of a socio-cultural phenomenon in the metaphorical expressions containing the verb *xordan* (to eat). It seems ‘adversity’ would be a cultural preference in the history of Persian society and language. The sense of this negative connotation in Persian may reveal the fact that this concept is deeply integrated in the mind of Persians through which it manifests itself in the metaphorical expressions of EATING concepts as: *qose xordan* (grief EAT) ‘grieve’, *hasrat xordan* (envy EAT) ‘envy’, *xun-e del/jegar xordan* (blood of heart/liver EAT) ‘eat heart out’, *šekast xordan* (failure EAT) ‘fail’. It seems that the Persian belly is “the seat of negative emotions” together with “an abdomen centering conceptualization”.

Different communities may manipulate different ways of reflecting the socio-cultural significance of food/eating. Indeed, through a close study of metaphorical concepts, we may be able not only to identify the social/ cultural significance of food in, for example, Persian culture and society, but also to uncover the procedures by which the social/interpersonal relations in Persian culture are formed, established, recognized, and evidenced in Iranian society. In such a gourmand culture, where the lover eats the liver/lips of the beloved, where the fool eats the brain of donkey, where eating grief, envy, and greed are the common practice of Iranians in everyday life, it will be reasonable that metaphorical language extensively uses edibles to describe social relations, to handle politics, or to create love stories and fictions. This study then is merely a beginning effort in Persian language and culture to scrutinize the role of culture in the organization of thought, disposition, and lust.

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