

## Role of Body Members in Constructing Metaphors in Persian Political Texts

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**Doi: 10.5901/mjss.2012.v3n3p171**

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**Abstract:** The major aim of this study was to explore how the body parts play roles in Persian political texts as metaphorical expressions according to cognitive point of view. Due to this fact, by examining a number of contemporary political expressions, the accumulated data were attributed into different body members including: *dast* (hand), *cheshm* (eye), *sar* (head), *pā* (foot), *ru* (face), *dahān* (mouth), *del* (stomach, heart), *shāne* (shoulder), *angosht* (finger), *zabān* (tongue), *dandān* (tooth), *gush* (ear), *sine* (breast), *ghalb* (heart) and *gardan* (neck). Based on the findings, there are fifteen body members by applying which the political metaphors are conceptualized and reflected in Persian political discourse. Furthermore, the results obtained from the current study revealed that among the human body members which are conceptualized in Persian political texts, "head" is the most frequent one.

**Key words:** discourse analysis, politics, political texts, cognitive linguistics, metaphor, body members

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### Introduction

Cognitive linguistics is a novel school of linguistics and also one of the most innovative and exiting approaches to the study of language and thought. Metaphor as one of the most prominent part of this approaches, considered to be an active and basic process in human's conceptual system which is extensively reflected in everyday language. In fact, contrary to traditional point of view which had an influence on most of previous studies, thought of metaphor as just a literary items and nothing more, the cognitive linguistics has given this area a new outlook and novel identity by considering the metaphor as a device to conceptualize our daily language and various discourses ranging from spoken to written, from learner language to academic or professional (legal, medical, political). Based on cognitive approach, by using metaphorical expressions, one can reflect an abstract concept in terms of concrete one. Today, cognitive linguists believe that human's body member is one of the common and frequent fields through which, one can conceptualizes an abstract concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Regarding the vast amount of use and application of body members as conceptualized metaphors in Persian political texts and discussions, no comprehensive research or study have done about their source domain from which the metaphorical expression have made, so it is essential to investigate about the different parts of human's body which are borrowed to conceptualize some abstract concepts use in some Persian political texts. Considering this fact, the study takes as primary the analysis of the use of metaphorical body members first and then the frequency of each body member will be illuminated and the most productive body member in political metaphors will be represented. Totally, this paper strives to classify these body members. Moreover, we delve the most frequent borrowed field and the reason of that.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

### 1.1 Cognitive Linguistics

Croft and Cruse (2005) mention that cognitive linguistics is relatively a new approach to the study of language that starts to emerge in the 1970s and has been enormously active since the 1980s. This contemporary movement of cognitive approach arouses a lot of interest among the scholars of different fields such as psychologist, philosophers, and linguists. They emphasize that in this kind of approach, researchers investigate the relations among human's mind, language and experiences. Horie (1997) states that cognitive linguistics closely allies clearly with linguistic anthropology, neuroscience and natural language processing, because of their common interests in exploring symbolic and image-schematic organizations of language. Evan and Green (2006) point out that cognitive linguists strive to describe linguistic systematicity, structure and function and also say that language reflects patterns of thoughts and so the study of language is to study patterns of conceptualization. Langacker (1990) claims that in cognitive approach language is considered as a part of human's cognition and should not be thought that we can have a modular look toward that. Robinson and Ellis (2008) claim that in cognitive linguistics, we investigate the language, cognition and communication which are not apart from each other by considering this fact that cognition and language create each other and language reflects the outside world in a way that human beings realize and so it has a root in conceptualized experiences of human beings. Dirven and Verspoor (2004) believe that the evolution within cognitive linguistics leads to deeper insights into the nature and functioning of language and its relation to cognition, culture and communities because from this view point, all linguistic signs are part of the human mind. Bussman (1996) states that in cognitive approach the language is considered as the patterns of conceptualization in human's mind.

### 1.2 Metaphor in cognitive linguistics

As mentioned before, according to cognitive linguists point of view metaphor has the most salient function in figurative language. Evan and Green (2006) mention that "conceptual metaphor theory" has been proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Based on this theory, metaphor is not simply a stylistic feature of language, but this belief itself is essentially metaphorical in nature. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) metaphor is a conceptualized term through which one can transfer an abstract concept through the concrete one. So, from this perspective, human being's not only speak in metaphorical terms, but also think in metaphorical terms. Musolff and Zinken (2009) explain that many conceptual metaphors are universal at a high level of abstraction and the variations among them are because of a culture-close level, so the conceptualized metaphors vary within cultures. Trim (2007) also believes that conceptual metaphors are associated with culture. In other words, metaphors may be transferred from one language with specific culture to another by changing the metaphoric image to fit the target culture.

Deignan (2010) mentions that according to conceptual metaphor theory, a metaphor is a link between the source domain which is physically experienced and the target domain which is abstract. Carroll (2008) considers conceptual metaphor as a psychological matter. Raymond and Gibbs (2008) point out that according to cognitive point of view, metaphor is a kind of mental mapping that has an effect on human being's thought and imagination. Actually, metaphor and its connection to human's thought is like a widespread network which goes beyond the human's mind and covers the cultural world. Yu (2008) divides conceptual metaphor into two kinds including: primary metaphors and complex metaphors. He states that primary metaphors derived directly from our experiences and therefore are likely to be universal whereas complex metaphors are the combinations of primary metaphors and cultural beliefs.

### 1.3 Metaphor in political discourse

El Refaie (2009) investigates the applied metaphors in political cartoons and considers the audience responses. In fact, he surveys the ways in which readers interpret multimodal metaphors. The results show that the interpretation of metaphors is somehow dependent upon people's socio-cultural background, as well as on the contexts in which the metaphors are used. Charteris-Black (2009) considers the function of metaphor in political communication and concludes that based on his analysis, a single metaphor may associated with ethos, pathos and logos. Beard (2000) claims that by knowing how to use metaphorical language in a political discourse is an influential way for gaining power or keeping power. Woods (2006) states that metaphorical expressions mostly used by politician in order to give them this opportunity to express their opinions and change them in the way that they prefer. Moreno (2008) searches the different metaphors

which were used by Hugo Ch'aves. He realizes that Hugo Ch'aves used various metaphors as means of referring to people, revolution and hostile as three target domains.

#### 1.4 Human body members as a metaphorical expression

Ning Yu (2008) investigates about conceptual metaphor and its interaction between body and culture. He states that while body is a potentially universal source for emerging conceptual metaphor, culture roles as a filter for selecting them. In other words, metaphors are generated from bodily experience but formed by cultural realization and so they are cultural-specific. He also refer to this point that "face" as one of the human being's body member is one of the most common member by helping which both Chinese and English can make a lot of conceptual metaphors. He says that the reason for that is related to this fact that face is the most distinctive part of a person because we identify people by their faces and this member stands out in our memory.

Gibbs (2006) explains that according to embodiment premise which is nominated in cognitive linguistics, the researchers look for the connection between mind-body and language-body. Johnson (1999) points out that human being's body plays a significant role in our creation of meaning and its understanding and his embodiment with the bodily and cultural world builds the contours of what is meaningful to him. El Refaie (2009) believes that one of the central opinions of conceptual metaphors theory is that most of the metaphors derived from our physical experience and are likely to be realized in similar ways by all human beings. Gibbs (2006: 1) explains that in cognitive science the term 'embodiment' related to "understanding the role of an agent's own body in its everyday, situated cognition". Maalej and Yu (2011: 1) quoted from Enfield and Wierzbicka (2002) that "the explicit use of body-parts terminology in emotion expressions is the tip of the iceberg, which is a good place to start if we want to know more about the whole submerged beneath the sea. They mentions that 'the whole submerged beneath the sea' refers to the body in the mind (Johnson, 1987), the culture in the mind (Shore, 1996), the culture in the body (Maalej, 2008).

Marmaridou (2011) investigate about the relevance of 'face' in Modern Greek by considering embodiment hypothesis. She mentions that by using the word 'prosopo' in Modern Greek and its polysemies, various positive and negative connotations of adjectives in collocations are made which are not only reveal embodied personhood, psychological and social human's aspects, but also show spatial orientations. Vainik (2011) surveys dynamic body parts in Estonian figurative for descriptions of their emotions. She comes to this conclusion that chest and heart are conceptualized as containers for emotion and the more common dynamic members are different parts of the head, the face, the eyes and lips. She also mentions that it seems there is no specific relation between the particular emotions and particular body members that is the body parts refer to both positive and negative emotions. Nissen (2011) compares the nonliteral uses of "mouth" in English with Spanish and Danish and comes to this conclusion that metaphorizations are influenced by cultural differences.

Siahaan (2011) compares the usage of two body members including: head and eye in German and Indonesian. She concludes that in both languages these two body members often target the same conceptual domain. Besides, her findings reveals that Indonesian speakers prefer to use kepala (head) for position and mata (eye) for the appearance while German speakers consider function for both kopf(head) and auge (eye).

Yu (2011) studies the Chinese cultural ways of understanding speech and language according to the chain from speech organs to language. Yu indicates that among various body members, she (tongue), chi (teeth), chun (lips), and zui or kou (mouth) are Chinese terms which are applied metaphorically to refer to more abstract linguistic action and function. Nagai and Hiraga consider the relationship between the outer body part that is hara (belly) and the inner body part that is koshi (lower back) in Japanese. They find out that in Japanese figurative expressions with koshi are associated with a human possessor which is strongly linked to motion or attitude, whereas hara metaphorical expressions are related to mental, spiritual or activities. Occhi (2011) has a cultural- linguistic view toward Japanese eye expressions and states that eye have a crucial role in Japanese language and culture. She shows that the expressions considering eye contact have reveals the nature of Japanese social interaction and social hierarchy schema. Moreover, she points out that Gender is another factor which has influence on using eye expressions.

Sharifian (2011) examines the conceptualized metaphors containing cheshm (eye) in Persian. He explains that the conceptualized expressions which are built by cheshm as one of the body parts, related to emotions, feelings, personality, culture, traits, intuition, knowing and seldom with thinking. Furthermore, he emphasizes the close relationship among language, body and culture. Sharfian (2008) also comes up with conceptualization of del (heart-stomach) and other terms of internal body organs in Persian language. He mentions that del is associated with vast number of cultural schemas and it may related to emotion, desire, patience, courage, compassion, and thought and memory. Also he comes

to this conclusion that some Persian metaphorical expressions which are conceptualized by del, may reflect something that can be tightened, opened, wounded, filled, burned, collapsed, pulled out or stolen.

Maalej (2011) survey the mental faculties such as thinking, understanding, knowing and speaking and physical states such as sleep, death, and passage of time which are conceptualized through *ḡayn* (eye) and vision in Tunisian Arabic. Maalej also states that the *ḡayn* is conceptualized as a source domain for expressing emotions including: love, desire, anger, guilt and envy, character traits such as ambition, insolence and cultural value such as respect and hospitality. Totally he points out that using *ḡyan* as a conceptualized metaphor is not just related to human body and physical environment, but also is a mediator between cognition and culture. Aksen (2011) investigate about the figurative uses of *bas* (head) and *ayak* (feet) in Turkish. He explains that head usually implies positive culture value while foot has a negatively evaluated in Turkish. Moreover, head and feet combine in a large number of expressions. Due to this fact, the position of body members on the verticality scales is applied to conceptualized contrasts in social satisfaction. Zahedi (2012) is another researcher who searches about body parts in language. He reveals that how human body parts are used in the linguistics semiosis of Persian and English and affirms other researcher's hypothesis that conceptualized metaphor are basically rooted in human cognitive abilities of semiotic representation whereas languages as semiotic system are restricted to their cultures.

## 2. Purpose of the study

This study has been come up with the main purpose of deeply highlighting the conceptualized metaphors which have been derived from the human body members producing by political Persian speakers. Moreover, these metaphors would be scrutinized. Furthermore, the percentages of these applied metaphors would be given and the most frequent one in Persian political texts would be taken into account.

## 3. Methodology

This research was carried out on Persian newspapers published in Iran. The accumulated data are completely derived randomly from Persian political sections of newspapers from the year 2008 to 2011. Totally, in this paper 160 numbers from 6 types of different newspapers including: Khorasan (30 numbers), Hamshahri (10 numbers), Etemad (15 numbers), Ghods (30 numbers), Mardom Salari (45 numbers) and Jomhorie Eslami (30 numbers) have been analyzed and all the borrowed metaphors from human body members have been derived. Furthermore, they were translated into English. At the end, a frequency table is illustrated based on the accumulated data.

## 4. Results

After analyzing conceptualized metaphors which are derived from human body parts, fifteen members have been found in Persian political texts. For each human body member, two examples are put forward along with the English word by word translation of the utterance. In both Persian and English translation, metaphors are highlighted by red color. Finally, a frequency table is illuminated.

### 1. Dast (Hand)

- in movaffaghiyyat be dalile vojude **daste komake parvardegār** va hozure āgāhāneye mardom ast.

Translation:

This success is the result of the existence of **helping hand of God** and people's conscious attendance.

- u bar ahammiyyate shenākhte **dasthāye penhān va peydāye doshman** taʔkid kard.

Translation:

He emphasises on recognizing **the hostile's hidden and apparent hands**.

### 2. Cheshm (Eye)

- badtarin va zeshtarin chiz ke **be cheshme man āmad**, harfhāyi bud ke az zabāne u sāder shod.

Translation:

The worst and ugliest thing that **came to my eye**, were his saying that exports from his tongue.

- javānāne keshvar **nure cheshmhāye mā** hastand.

Translation:

The youth of the country is **the light of our eyes**.

### 3. Sar (Head)

- az shomā yek eshāre va az mā **bā sar davidan**.

Translation:

One point from you and we **run by our heads**.

- **sarkeshāne ghānun** masʔule payāmadhāye ehtemāli ān hastand.

Translation:

**The pulling head of law** are responsible for the probable resulting outcomes.

### 4. Pa (Foot)

- ānhā ensāf, ghānun va akhlāgh rā **zire pā gozāshtand**.

Translation:

They **put under their feet** justice, law and morality.

- khode shomā midānid ke **dast va pā zadanhā** na az eghtedār balke az zaʔf ast.

Translation:

You yourselves know that **hitting of hand and foot** is not because of power but is because of weakness.

### 5. Ru (Face)

- agar mardom dar keshvar be āyande omidvār nabāshand, be entekhābāt **ruye khosh** neshān nemidahand.

Translation:

If people of the country are not hopeful for future, they will not show **a happy face** to election.

- ān Goruhhāyi ke mokhālef hastand, nemikhāhand ān keshvar **ruye amniyat** va solh rā bebinad.

Translation:

That groups which are opposed, do not want that country to see **the face of safety** and peace.

### 6. Dahān (Mouth)

- in monāzerehā tu **dahane ān kasāni zad** ke birun tabligh mikardand ke in reghābathā bi fāyde ast.

Translation:

These arguments **hit the mouths of those** who claimed from outside that these competitions are useless.

- mā **cheshm entezāre** movaffaghiyathāye baʔdi hastim.

Translation:

We are **eye waiting** for next successes.

### 7. Del (Stomach)

- agar dar hame hāl **del rā be khodā motavajeh konim**, mā keshvare movaffaghi khāhim dāsht.

Translation:

If **our heart considers God** all the time, we will have a successful country.

- khotbeye rahbarehān omid rā be **dele ommateshān** bāz gardānd.

Translation:

Thier leader's saying returned hope to **their nation's stomach**.

### 8. Angosht (Finger)

- **angoshte etehām** bar chand farde siyāsi eshāre mikonad.

Translation:

**Fingers of condemnation** are pointing to some political persons.

- hozure aksere mardom hame rā shegeft zade kard va bāʔes shod jahān **angosht be dahān bemānad**.

Translation:

The attendance of majority of people surprised everyone and made the world **put his finger in his mouth**.

### 9. Zabān (Tongue)

- in kånāl aʔlāve bar pakhshe mostaghime sokhanāne az **zabāne rahbar**, baʔzi az akhbāre fori rā monʔakes kard.

Translation:

This channel displays the live syings from **leader's tonuge**, reflected some immediate news.

- in javābe goftehāyi ast ke doshmanāne shomā **be zabānhāyeshān āvardand**.

This is an answer to the sayings that your enemies **brought to their tongues**.

**10. Dandān (Tooth)**

- in do goruhe ghodratmand barāye in goruh **dandāneshān rā tiz kardeand**.

Translation:

These two powerful groups have **sharpened their teeth** for this group.

- ou barāye mā yek **javābe dandān shekan** āmāde karde bud.

Translation:

He prepares **a breaking tooth answer** for us.

**11. Gush (Ear)**

- **goshāye doyā** bishtar az hamishe bāz ast.

Translation:

**The ears of the world** are open more than ever.

- mā be pishnahādāte rahbar bā **gushe jān** gush dādim.

Translation:

We listened to the leader's suggestions with **ear of spirit**.

**12. Sine (Breast)**

- sange mardome faghir rā **be sine mizanid**.

You **hit** the poor's stone to **your breast**.

- in vāghean **akhbāre sinesuzi** ast va mardom mote?ajeb shodand.

Translation:

This news actually is **burning breast** and people were surprised.

**13. Ghalb (Heart)**

- u az ommat khod dar ghalbe sarzamine bigāne setāyesh kard.

Translation:

He praised his own nation in **the heart of the strange territory**.

- shorāye shahr be **ghalbe moshkelāt** miravad va talāsh dar haleshān dārad.

Translation:

The council of the city goes to **the heart of the problems** and tries to solve them.

**14. Gardan (Neck)**

- tarafdārāne u tasdigh kardand ke in raftār va **gardan koloftihā** dorost nist.

Translation:

His fans confirm that these behaviors and **making thickneck** are not right.

- in afrād mikhāhand dar in keshvar **gardan keshi** konand.

Translation:

These people want to **pull the neck** in this country.

**15. Shāne (Shoulder)**

- mā bāyad **shāne be shāne** be rāhi ke entekhābe kardehim edāme dahim.

Translation:

We should **shoulder by shoulder** continue the way that we choose.

- dalile piruziye ānhā tavajoh nakardan be **shāke shānehāye sāyerin** bud.

Translation:

The result of their victory is because of not paying attention to other's **horn shoulder**.

The table of human body members and the amount of their usages in Persian political texts are illuminated as follows:

**Table 1** Human body members and their Frequencies in Persian Political Texts

Human Body members in political metaphors	Frequency	Frequency (percentage)
Head	100	25%
Hand	88	22%
Foot	56	14%
Stomach	48	12%
Eye	28	7%
Ear	16	4%
Face	12	3%
Heart	8	2%
Tongue	8	2%
Neck	4	1%
Tooth	4	1%
Shoulder	4	1%
Finger	4	1%
Breast	4	1%
Mouth	4	1%

## 5. Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the function of human body members as a source domain in creating the metaphorical expression in Persian political texts and also regarding their frequencies, the most productive one was indicated. According to Lakoff and Johnson's beliefs, in this research metaphor was considered as a mean for building an abstract concept based on the concrete one through conceptualization and embodiment. There are various fields by using which the metaphorical expressions can be made and human body member is one of the most salient one which have a crucial role as a source domain for moving toward a target domain. By investigating and scrutinizing the human body member field as a source domain in Persian political texts, we come to this conclusion that this field have been actively used and has a vast application. Based on the data, there are fifteen body members including: dast (hand), cheshm (eye), sar (head), pā (foot), ru (face), dahān (mouth), del (stomach), shāne (shoulder), angosht (finger), zabān (tongue), dandān (tooth), gush (ear), sine (breast), ghalb (heart) and gardan (neck) which are applied in Persian political texts. Moreover, the most productive and frequent ones, are "sar", "dast" and "pā", respectively. This may due to this fact that comparing these three body members with others, they are the ones which are consciously used a lot in human being's daily activities. In other words, "sar" is as a highest human member which is the center of thinking, reasoning and analyzing and these are the activities which we always deal with. Furthermore, "dast" and "pā" are the members which are consciously used by human beings and besides they are two of the first members that human beings become familiar with and consciously experience them almost from beginning. So as a result, these members are the most concrete and tangible ones for human beings and they can be realized better.

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