

The Metaphoric Concept of XORDAN ‘To Eat’ in Persian

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the cognitive-semantic content of *xordan* in Persian, and whether it demarcates similar conceptual domain as the English verb ‘to eat’. The verbs related to the bodily experience of eating or consuming food is the source of metaphorical conceptualizations and mappings in various semantic domains rooted in universal experiential realities. Cross linguistic, cross cultural studies have reported both commonalities and variations in the conceptualization of the act of eating. Adopting the basic tenets of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), this study is an attempt to delve into the conceptual system of Persian in order to explore its specific cultural embodiment, and socio-cultural influences in the use of metaphorical concepts of *xordan*. With a focus on the basic syntax and semantic properties of *xordan*, this study employs a lexical structure, i.e. the radial category in a chaining model to illustrate the complexities of metaphorical extensions of eating in Persian. Our observations reveal that the metaphorical expressions of the verb of *xordan* ‘to eat’ occur extensively in Persian, manifesting the Persians’ unique way of thinking and mind. These particular em-minded cultural models have widely left their traces in the Persians’ belief systems, the effects therefore, have been extended into Persian metaphoric language and cognitive conceptualizations.

Keywords: cross-cultural, conceptualization, mapping, embodiment, radial category

1. Introduction

Eating is a routine, vital activity fundamental to human beings’ existence; however, do all humans conceptualize such event, the physical activity of bodily intake of a substance, in the same manner? Cross linguistic, cross cultural studies have reported both commonalities and variations in the conceptualization of eating activity. While a language as English stresses on the eating verbs primarily based on the manner of consuming objects, some other languages seem to distinguish them according to the particular characteristics of the consumed objects (Newman, 2009; Rice, 2009; Wierzbicka, 2009). The type of the foodstuffs consumed and the way of their consumption in the process of ingestion seem to be the most notable parameters to lead people to differentiate their eating activities. The disparities within these dimensions are to a great extent the result of native speakers’ salient environment and cultural practices in everyday life, i.e. as Khajeh and Imran (2012, p. 72) point out, “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.” Moreover, the significant life-sustaining role of eating activity can be a strong implication for its widespread semantic extension and subsequently emerging various figurative metaphorical expressions across languages. Furthermore, it would not be far from truth that some languages with similar syntactic rules may have little commonalities in their semantic structure, and those with similar semantics may be variant in their syntax. It is expected that intra-language comparative studies, e.g. Persian and English, would yield notable insights into highlighting possible universal and/or cultural developments of such processes.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the cognitive-semantic content of eating concept in Persian, if the concept of verb *xordan* ‘to eat’ in Persian demarcates similar conceptual domain as English verb ‘to eat’. Our endeavor, therefore, is to investigate the dynamics of Persian light verb *xordan*, looking for the patterns of

meaning extensions through describing the mechanism of its construction, categorization, and understanding across cognitive semantic domain which in turn sheds light on the fundamental attributes of the human conceptual system.

2. Background of Study

2.1 Persian Verbal Structure

Persian is very productive in the formation of multiword verbal units using productive processes in conceptualizing new ideas and whereby making and adding new verbs to its repository of complex predicates.

Persian is an SOV, verb final, pro-drop language; however, it involves head-initial word order in the structures noun-genitive, noun-adjective, preposition-noun phrases, and noun-relative constructions. Persian is also known as a mixed-structure, non-rigid, a partially free word-order language (Karimi, 1994, p. 43-73). The complete canonical word order for phrasal argument in Persian is: (S) (PP) (O) V, but it may take some other forms as well. Persian language manifests a small number of simple verbs; less than 200, while studies related to syntactic structure of English reveal several thousand simple verbs. On the other hand, one of the striking characteristics of Persian lies in its verbal system, in which a limited set of about twenty of its simple verbs are used in light verb constructions (LVCs) to form a bulk of more than 4000 compound verbs carrying particular verbal notions. Persian verbs are classified into two major types of compound verb formations as *combination* and *incorporation* (Dabirmoghaddam, 1997). In combination, verbal elements (LVs) are combined with preverbal elements usually a nominal, though it can be an adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional phrase (Ghomeishi & Massam, 1994; Karimi, 1997; Dabirmoghaddam, 1997, 1999, 2005; Karimi-Doostan, 1997, 2005; Megerdoomian, 2002; family, 2008).

On the other hand, the direct object while losing its object marker can incorporate with the verbal part and form a compound construction with a conceptual whole. The argument structure of the verb then changes from a transitive verb into an intransitive one.

1)

a. *mā qazā-ye-mān rā xor-d-im*

we food-GEN-POSS-1PL ACC eat-PST-1PL

‘We ate our food.’

b. *mā qazā xor-d-im*

we food eat-PST-1PL

‘We ate food.’

Moreover, some prepositional structures can incorporate with verbs, leading to disappearance of preposition.

2)

a. *ānhā be zamin xor-d-and*

they to ground eat-PST-3PL

‘They fell down.’

b. *ānhā zamin xor-d-and*

they ground eat-PST-3PL

‘They fell down.’

Compound verbs also known as LVCs or complex predicates carry a single syntactic predicate. The light verb elements, with partially or wholly bleached thematic content; however, behave like simple verbs or heavy verbs in carrying tense, aspect, and negation morphology in Persian. In other words, the predicate lexical meaning of this construction is achieved through the non-verbal element, the LV; on the other hand, contributes certain semantic information as volition, inception, causality, and so on (Pantchewa, 2010) which makes it fairly abstract. The distinction between light and heavy verbs is related to the fact that the LV contains a very abstract meaning, while heavy verb has a full lexical semantics.

In the following sentence, the LV *xordan* is semantically empty, however, together with its pre-verbal element *zamin* ‘earth’, it means ‘falling down’ while as a heavy verb it denotes eating activity taking a direct object.

3) *ali zamin xord*

Ali earth eat/collide-PST-3SG

‘Ali fell down.’

Therefore, the nominal constituent of a complex predicate is a non-specific noun phrase which is regarded as the sister of the LV and receives structural case.

In English, the semantics of LVs is also reduced or bleached, and the non-verbal element occupies the largest semantic information, as in *take a walk, take a shower, make a scene, or make a mistake*, i.e. the most of the argument structure is derived from the non-verbal constituent. LVCs in English, unlike Persian, occurs less frequently than its simple heavy verb counterparts, the similar meanings are often expressed through simple verb alternatives as in *walk* instead of *take a walk*. In Persian, however, the LVCs which are used to express certain verbal notions are almost the only language choice, and they are frequently translated by a heavy simple verb in a different language like English.

2.2 *Semantics of Xordan ‘To Eat’*

The most frequently sense of the word ‘eat’ according to Concise Oxford English Dictionary is ‘put (food) into the mouth and chew and swallow it. On the other hand, a verb such as EAT is one of the most frequent occurring verb in daily speech which is, however, totally complex in nature. Pardeshi and his colleagues (2006) believe that this complexity lies in the main aspects of eating concept or the consumption of food. It is usually defined in terms of its edibility which involves making an entity decrease in size while consumed, making it invisible as used up, incorporating one item in another, taking the outward properties of eaten items, displaying an intimate bodily contact with something (somebody), and living or relying on the objects eaten. The inherent complexity of eating process, therefore, might lead Persian language like some other languages, to develop a widely used range of metaphorical EAT senses while occurring with certain sets of lexical items.

The first immediate interpretation of the heavy verb *xor (-dan)*, ‘eat (-INF)’ by Persian speakers is ‘to eat/to ingest’ (as in food or drink). *Xordan* as the action of ingesting is a transitive verb taking a volitional subject or a proto-agent argument as in Dowty’s terms (1991), and a second nominal as the object of which is being ingested. On the other hand, the verb *nušidan* ‘to drink’ in modern Persian is substituted by the LV *xordan*. In more informal registers, the verb *xordan* for *nušidan* can also mean excessive drinking of alcohol as in *xeili xorde* ‘much eaten/drank. *Xordan* used in LVCs, on the other hand, donates abstract or bleached semantics in contexts mostly through negative encounters.

NP1+ NP2 + XORDAN (ingesting)4) *maryam nān rā xor-d*

NP1 NP2 V

Maryam bread ACC eat-PST-3SG

‘Maryam ate the bread.’

The same syntactic structure of NP1 + NP2 + *XORDAN* construction can be identified when *xordan* expresses itching or irritating.

NP1 + NP2 + XORDAN (itching/irritating)5) *pirāhan-e pašmi tan-e bače ra mi-xor-ad*

NP1 NP2 V

shirt-GEN wool body-GEN child ACC PROG-eat-3SG

‘The wool shirt irritates the child’s body.’

The most occurring case of the LV *xordan* after ingesting is ‘to hit/collide’ functioning as the intransitive verb taking a proto-patient argument (a prepositional phrase).

NP1 + to Np2 + XORDAN (hit/collide)6) *dast-am be divār xor-d*

NP1 to NP2 V

hand-POSS-1SG to wall eat-PST-3SG

‘My hand hit the wall.’

The verb *xordan* can also be applied in the same syntactic structure meaning match/fit.

NP1 + to NP2 + XORDAN (match/fit)

7) *in boluz be šalvār-at mi-xor-ad*

NP1 to NP2 V

this bluz to pants-POSS-2SG PROG-hit-3SG

‘This blouse complements your pants.’

In the more conversational usage, the word for reaching a certain position is also derived from the LV *xordan*.

NP1 + to NP2 + XORDAN (hit/reach a position)

8) *in kuče be xiyābān mi-xor-ad*

NP1 to NP2 V

this alley to street PROG-hit-3SG

‘This alley enters a street.’

While the two different structures discussed above seem not to be fully related, the underlying meaning each specifies shows highly polysemous nature of the verb *xordan* in Persian. As it is showed, *XORDAN* conveys new meanings each time joined with a certain pre-verbal element. The resulted meaning seems to be dependent to the whole LVC, not to be separated from the construction itself or as Lakoff (1977, p. 239) argues, “it’s not the meaning of the parts fit together to give the meaning of whole. Rather, the meanings of the parts mesh with [extra linguistic] knowledge to give rise to the meaning of the whole. The meaning of the whole is greater than the meaning of the parts.”

To know to what extent the LVCs’ meaning is the result of the meaning of its constituents, it should be stated that some constructions are semantically transparent-their meaning is compositional, entirely based on the meaning of their parts. On the other side of the meaning spectrum of LVCs, there are some forms with a fully non-transparent opaque semantic. Idioms with non-compositional complex meaning arising from metaphorical extension fall for most part under this category of meaning opaqueness. Furthermore in Persian, constructions like *nāhār xordan* ‘to eat lunch’ and *qazā xordan* ‘eat food’ are characterized as quite literal, the forms like *jā xordan* ‘to be surprised’ and *juš xordan* ‘be anxious’ are idiomatic and those compounds as *hasrat xordan* ‘to eat envy’ or *liz xordan* ‘be slipped on’ seem to be metaphorical semi-transparent, or somewhere between literal and idiomatic expressions.

The majority of LVCs in Persian stand somewhere between semantically transparent and non-transparent constructions. These semi-transparent light verb expressions as Karimi concludes are idiomatic combing expressions whose meanings are derived on the basis of the meaning of their parts (1997, p. 23). Then this quasi-compositional nature of the LVCs in Persian (pre-verbal + *XORDAN*), where the forms are not completely idiomatic, but with some certain motivations within their constituent meanings, provide us with an outstanding window into exploring the link between language semantics and its underlying cognitive manifestations.

As it was mentioned earlier, the LV *xordan* in Persian, mostly occurs in an intransitive construction with a nominal which functions as a proto-patient that undergoes a change of state or experience. The meaning expressed by this LV usually is an affected action bearing a negative connotation. Moreover on the basis of the type of action performed, *XORDAN* can be **telic** or **atelic**, i.e. undergoing an action or experiencing a state. According to Family (2008) telic is a complete action or one that expresses an action that occurs “in x” time, and atelic is an incomplete action or one that occurs “for x” time. In this sense, LVs do not maintain the lexical content of the verb *xordan* ‘to ingest’, but manifests a metaphorical extension of its original meaning. While the verbal notion of hit/collide in the expressions *dastam b divār xord* ‘my hand hit the wall’ serves as undergoing a telic or sudden action, in the figurative unit *xun-e del xordan* ‘eating the blood of heart’ (to be extremely annoyed) the ingesting meaning of the verb *xordan* is used as a basis for extending the idea of undergoing an atelic action. In other words, the metaphorical meaning extension of *xordan* expressing the concept of atelic action is defined based on its ‘eat’ meaning, and the idea of undergoing telic action is captured through verbs of touching or as Jackendoff (1990, p. 106) calls them “impact verbs” as *hit/collide/strike* which express intransitive inchoative event verbs with “motion of the theme culminating in contact with the reference object”.

3. Theoretical Framework

As with massive number of light verb constructions in Persian, there should be an appropriate approach to explore the mechanisms at work which motivates the conceptual metaphor extensions of the LVCs. Searching for

the underlying categorization of *xordan* light verb in a chaining model, the syntactic-semantic (form-content) resemblance of the constructions are studied within a blend of Lakoff's (1987), and Langacker's (1987, 1999) radial categories.

The humans' experiences are sort out into specific compartments as they are, to enable them to comprehend the world and interact with that. This mostly unconscious sorting process is known as 'categorization'. Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, therefore, image-schemas are prominent constructions which are organized in human cognition and emerged from bodily and social interaction with the real world at a pre-conceptual level (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987, 1989). Image-schemas are gestalt structures, i.e. while they comprise smaller constituent parts, they are organized, coherent, and unified whole within the bodily experiences. Categorization, hence, is a mental processing which is grounded in physical bodily experience and organized by abstract structuring principles (image schemas).

The following figure is an attempt to visualize the concept of categorization process in experientialism view through which image-schemas are formed via bodily experiences and the body's interaction with the world. The categorization process is emerged from the embodied constructs and the body acts as a mediator, providing our conception of the world with the proper schemata.

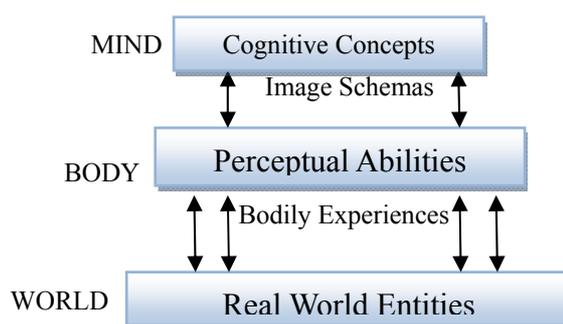


Figure 1. Categorization in experiential realism view

As the above figure illustrates, categories are not directly connected to the real world, these mental phenomena experiences the world around via the embodied conception. Langacker (1987) distinguishes two types of categorization as **by prototype** and **by schema**. They are viewed as interrelated but concentrate on various aspects of the same event. Categories mostly represent complex structures growing through meaning extension from certain prototype. The meaning extension may be emerged from a non-central member in the category, i.e. from a local prototype, illustrating the whole image of the category as bearing the features of family resemblance. Lakoff (1987) observes that in cognitive linguistics, the prominent concept on the basis of category extension is that of motivation. A non-arbitrary connection between a specific concept and its related extensions are made through motivation which is in turn the result of some other existing concepts within a particular speech community. Lakoff asserts that "motivation depends on overall characteristics of the conceptual system, not just characteristics of the category at hand" (1987, p. 113). Moreover, motivation can be justified with the form-content relations grounded in a certain speech community, as it is with LV *xordan* among Persian speaking people.

Langacker (1993) points out that both schema and prototypes are inherent for the structure of a category, they manifest different angels of a coherent and unified phenomenon. On the other hand, he observes that extensions emerge while we try to categorize a new experience that slightly varies from previous experiences belonging to that category. In his view, extensions are formed from the prototype having their basis on metaphor, and metonymy. A schema is thus resulted from this extension, bearing the common characteristics of the prototype and the extension. The following figure represents principles of categorization based on Langacker's framework.

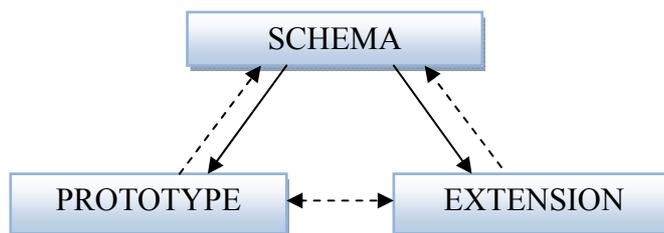


Figure 2. Categorization (based on Langacker, 1993, p. 2)

The solid arrows implies the specification or in Langacker's (1987) term "elaboration" which is represented by prototype and the related extensions. The dotted lines, on the other hand, denote the abstraction or "schematization" when a new schema is emerged. Hence, any extension in this process will cause creation of a new schema on the basis of an abstract level, and this category expansion leads to a 'higher' structure. According to Langacker (1987), these complex categories constitute advanced structures shaping schematic networks of nodes introducing schemata, prototype, and extension in this categorization.

4. Method and Data Collection

To carry out a systematic analysis of *Xordan* metaphors in Persian and English, the researcher will begin with documented material, both printed and on-line databases of Persian metaphors from a variety of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and some other lexicographical works such as dictionaries of idiomatic metaphorical expressions and thesauri, literary sources, and native speakers' intuition as corpus data. The data analysis of the corpus implies that LVCs which come within the same notions or semantic space will have the structure of an LV together with certain class of nominal or preverbal elements. In other words, the semantic space of the verb *xordan* is determined by certain notions as mappings and their related sub-mappings. The first task in analyzing the Persian LVCs of the verb *xordan* is to identify their semantic similarities and sets of constructions. Thus careful study of each specific LV leads us towards isolate groups of LVCs or *islands*. These *islands* as Family (2006) reports are clusters of LVCs which express similar verbal notions based on the same LV, and a specific type of pre verbal (PV) element. The resultant LVC carries a meaning which is not necessarily predictable from its constituents. As it seems the LV *xordan* in Persian contains notions that convey emotional abstract meanings, having a nominal pre verbal constituent which expresses a continuous negative feeling. In most cases the subject is affected by a suffering which is the consequence of a particular state of mind or someone's personal action as in *hers xordan* (greed *XORDAN*) 'be greedy'. It is clear that the meanings resided in the verb *xordan* are triggered by inherent properties of its specific PV element. In other words, certain LVCs come together in a chaining model to form specific notions in which one type of nominal which is specified by its common properties as physical, conceptual, semantic, and experiential knowledge combines with LV *xordan* to create different but highly interrelated meaning of LVC categories.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

In what follows concepts expressed by LVC *XORDAN* in Persian are analyzed and discussed in details.

5.1 Prototypical Use/A Basic Sense: Eat Food, Eat Drinking, Eat Medicine, Eat Bread/Salt

Table 1. [+animate, +agentive] eats [+edible]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| [+animate, +agentive] | [+edible] | [consuming solid/liquid] |

The main basic sense of *xordan* is to put a solid food in the mouth, chew and swallow that as it is shown in the following example:

9) *maryam sobhāne -aš rā xord*

Maryam breakfast-POSS-3SG ACC eat-PST-3SG

'Maryam ate her breakfast.'

In modern less formal registers in Persian, there is no lexical distinction between *xordan* and *nushidan* (eating & drinking) as it is in English. In other words, one single lexical item *xordan* is applied to introduce any form of activity for taking food/liquid stuffs in Persian.

Newman (1997, 2009) and Wierzbicka (2009) explain the main semantic differences between eating and drinking manner in English. Eating pertains to the nature of the entities consumed-things as solid objects and drinking concerns things like liquids. On the other hand, conceptualization of eating involves solid objects being carried to the mouth using the hand(s) followed by chewing activity while drinking does not recall the image of hand-to-mouth transportation and the presence of chewing afterward. Newman (1997) believes that the destructive process involved in consuming objects for eating, which is a key manner-related difference with drinking in English, leads eating to be extended in meaning introducing a variety of figurative uses of this verb in English.

A careful examination of corpus data concerning *xordan* LV in Persian, however, shows that the semantic differences between the nature of eating and drinking in English are not equivalent with Persian, that the sort of substances transported into the mouth for *xordan* cannot indeed be categorized as things not like liquids.

10) *qahve-am rā xordam*

coffee-POSS-1SG ACC eat-PST-1SG

‘I drank my coffee.’

Therefore in Persian, liquid substances can be the objects of *xordan* focusing on the wholeness of the drinking activity as a basic vital need in everyday life, i.e. the use of *xordan* for liquid stuffs is placed on the eating event as a whole emphasizing liquids as main sources of nourishment for living creatures. Breast milk, for example, as the sole source of nourishment for babies collocates with the verb *xordan* in Persian introducing the life-sustaining function of this verb as its primary conceptual concern.

11) *in bače tā do sālegi šir-e mādar-aš rā xord*

this child till two year milk-GEN mother-POSS-3SG ACC eat-PST-3SG

‘This child sucked his mother’s breast for two years.’

Moreover, Persian, unlike English, selects *xordan* with nouns which refer to drugs, pills, and capsules. It suggests that chewing activity may not manifest the same nature in the Persian conceptualization of the eating phenomenon as it does in English.

12) *ali daru-hā-yaš rā b moqe mi-xor-ad.*

Ali drug-PL-POSS-3SG ACC to time PROG-eat-3SG

‘Ali takes his drugs on time.’

The light verb *xordan* in Persian is at the center of a wealth of compound constructions and conventionalized figurative expressions. When *xordan* takes the edible objects with an animate and agentive subject, it mostly keeps its basic semantics as ‘eating’. One exception can be when *xordan* takes *nān* ‘bread’/ *namak* ‘salt’ as its object. It then also means ‘make a living, display hospitality and friendship’. Both *nān* and *namak* in Persian culture are staple food and prominent means of livelihood for the Iranians, they have *hormat* ‘reverence’, sustain life and symbolize earning a living. Sharing/eating *nān va namak* ‘bread and salt’ with someone means bonding with them a sense of close emotional relationship, familiarity, respect and trust. In Persian, bread is as old as time, revering it to a great extent, and regarding it as *barkat-e-xodā* ‘God’s bounty and grace’, taking oat by bread. Salt symbolizes incorruptible purity in Persian culture and sharing it shows hospitality and welcoming visitors.

5.2 *Living on, Making a Living, Illegal Use: Eat from Pocket, Eat Rent, Eat from Parents, Eat People’s Property, Eat Usury, Eat Bribe, Eat Money*

Table 2. [+animate, +agentive] eats [-edible]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-----------------------|-----------|---|
| [+animate, +agentive] | [-edible] | [making a living, using [illegally/usurping]] |

This category reveals the extensions of agentive aspect of an animate subject where its object is inedible (e.g. another person's labor or property). In other words, the basic feature of nourishment and enjoyable gustation which accompany the eating act motivate the conceptual metaphor extensions of *xordan* LV. In this case, the conceptual mapping of internalization can be construed from the extensions. It is the active role of the agent (eater) which motivates the mappings, rather than the effect on the patient (the object eaten). This metaphoric meaning extension enables the Persians to eat the objects as rent, funds, profit, air, money, bribe, inheritance, or someone's head/brain/heart/liver. Here, the metaphoric extensions of the LV *xordan* denote various meanings such as making a living, enjoying life, exploiting service or property, tormenting someone, or showing affection, love or sexual interact.

xordan, for example, can take non-edible physical entities or people as its objects referring to very means for earning a living and keeping alive like: *az jib xordan* 'live with the saved money', *az hoquq-e bāznešastegi xordan* 'depend on pension', *az vāledein xordan* 'live off parents'.

One may earn the life necessities through working hard, using the power of arm (hand), or saved money denoting surviving and managing life.

13) *az zur-e bāzu-š mi-xor-e*

from power-GEN arm-POSS-3SG PROG-eat-3SG

'He earns his living working hard.'

14) *čand sal-i hast k az kise mi-xor-e*

several year-GEN is that pocket PROG-eat-3SG

'He has been eating from pocket for several years.'

15) *as dārāi-ye xode-š mi-xor-e*

from property-GEN self-POSS-3SG PROG-eat-3SG

'She is living on her own property.'

Verb of eating like English may also be extended in respiratory domain to conceptualize in taking something physical like the air which depicts one sort of life enjoyment.

16) *raft-e birun havā boxor-e*

go-PCTP-3SG out air eat-3SG

'He has gone out for a walk.'

This category also reveals the extensions of agentive aspect of an animate subject where its object is another person's labor or property. This metaphoric meaning extension enables the Persians to eat the objects as money, bribe, inheritance, funds, and profit. Here, the metaphoric extension of the LV *xordan* denotes overcoming, taking the control of, or exploiting service or property with a type of nominal that's being taken advantage of. The metaphorical expression seems to suggest the original meaning of *xordan* as excessive eating, gluttony, or gormandizing.

17) *faqr bāes-e rešve-xordan šod-e*

poverty cause-GEN bribe eat-INF become-PCTP-3SG

'Poverty has caused bribery.'

18) *xordan-e rebā/nozul dar islām harām-e*

eating-GEN unlawful profit/usury in Islam unlawful is

'Usury is prohibited in Islam.'

Closely related to the above meaning extension of *xordan* are metaphoric expressions which indicate that someone (an agent) can eat another person's 'head', 'brain', or 'heart' (an inedible object) to make him irritated and upset. It seems in Persian, when being offended; one would start using up another person's head/brain or heart to force him experiencing a sort of psychological torment in destroying his intellectual or emotional container or its contents in the body.

19) *Sar/maqz-am ro xord*

head/brain-POSS-1SG ACC eat-PST-3SG

'She tormented me.'

20) *hamishe ba harf-ha-sh del-emun ro mi-xore*

always with word-PL-POSS-3SG heart-POSS-1PL ACC PROG-eat-3SG

‘He always makes us annoyed.’

Images of eating verb in Persian may also indicate intellectual or emotional satisfaction in affection or love domain. Therefore, it characterizes the internalization of abstractions which are the object of this affection in intellectual domain as, for example, learning knowledge, books, words, etc. or romantic love and sexual interaction in emotional domain.

21) *kalame kalame-ye ketāb ro xord-e*

word word-GEN book ACC eat-PCTP-3SG

‘He has fully memorized the book.’

22) *xeili xoşgel-e. ādam del-esh mi-xād doroste bexor-eš*

very beautiful-is. Human heart-POSS-3SG PROG-want-3SG eat-3SG

‘She is very beautiful. Everyone likes to have sex with her.’

23) *jegar-eto boxor-am*

liver-POSS-2SG eat-1SG

‘I love you so much.’

It is noteworthy to add that, sexual intercourse is generally considered as a pleasurable event in its prototypical sense indicating the agent (the consumer) having a strong physical effect on the patient (the food consumed). Moreover, destructive effect the eating has on the food being eaten has been metaphorized as the destructive impact the sexual intercourse has on the thematic patient that is object affectedness. The metaphor, therefore, is conceptualized in the way to present the concepts of both CONQUER and DESTRUCTION, or OVERCOMING and UNDERGOING suggesting the semantic extensions motivated based on both enjoyable sensation (internalization), and undergoing (destruction).

The main motivation behind metaphorical meaning extension of the LV *xordan* in above examples where it takes edible/non-edible items as its objects is metonymy. It will be a chief mechanism at play to introduce figurative uses of Persian *xordan*-related expressions.

5.3 Using up Valuable Properties: Eat Fuel, Eat Electric City, Eat Money, Eat Time

Table 3. [-animate, -patientive] eats [-abstract]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| [-animate, -patientive] | [-abstract] | [consuming/using up valuable inedibles] |

The subject may bear the role of an inanimate actor while its object is one of valuable properties. Here, the internalization image is a source of metaphorical extension of verbal concept. This mechanism is used to *xordan* LV while its extended meaning refers to concepts as ‘absorb/use’ as in the following example:

24) *in pirāhan va shalvār koli barāye-šān pul/āb xord-e ast*

this shirt and pants much for-POSS-3PL money/water eat-PCTP is

‘These shirt and pants cost them a lot.’

In the sense of ‘absorb/use’ meaning. The patient of *xordan* disappears as it enters into agent and incorporates with it conceptualizing a close interaction between the agent and patient suggesting usually an undesirable connotation.

25) *in bademjān-hā roqan-e zyād-i mi-xor-and*

this eggplant-PL oil-GEN much PROG-eat-PST-3PL

‘These egg plants use up much cooking oil.’

5.4 *Undergoing/Being Exposed to Certain Motion/Affected by: Eat Swing, Eat Kink, Eat Summersault, Eat Stumble, Eat Fold*

Table 4. [-animate, -patientive] eats [+abstract]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| [-animate, -patientive] | [+abstract] | [undergoing/ being exposed to/receiving the influence of/being affected by] |

The subject of the LVCs undergoes or receives certain types of unintentional repetitive motion. The movement may be a general non goal-directed which is resulted from an internal situation (muscle spasm), or performed by an external agent (moved by someone).

26) *dar rāh-e madrese, zamin xord-am v pā-yam pič xord*

in way-GEN school ground eat-PST-1SG and leg-POSS-1SG swing eat-PST-3SG

‘In the way to school, I fell down and my ankle sprained.’

27) *moratab dar taxt-aš vul mi-xor-ad*

constantly in bed-POSS-3SG slither PROG-eat-3SG

‘Constantly, he slithers in his bed.’

The received motion can also be an uncontrollable rotational movement as in:

28) *dar tasādoḡ-e diruz mašin-aš čand bar ma’laḡ xord*

in accident-GEN yesterday car-POSS-3SG several time summersaults eat-PST-3SG

‘In the yesterday accident, his car flipped over several times.’

Another type of meaning extension is when the subject undergoes an organized transformation. This type of topological change expressed by LV *xordan* is not directly imposed by an outside force, but by an unintentional, consequence of natural processes (environment effect), or an action. The resulted influence usually leads to damaging the subject or an unpleasant/unwanted state.

29) *dar havā-ye šarji-ye jonub, muhā b rāhat-i fer mi-xor-ad*

in weather-GEN humid-AGE south hair-PL with easily curl PROG-eat-3SG

‘In humid weather in the South, the hair easily gets curled.’

5.5 *Undergoing Physical/Psychological Damage, Being Affected/Hurt by an Instrument: Eat Slap, Eat Sword, Eat Bullet, Eat Hammer, Eat Curse*

Table 5. [+animate, -agentive] eats [-abstract]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| [+animate, -agentive] | [-abstract] | [undergoing/receiving the damage, being affected/hurt by an instrument] |

In comparison to English, Persian reveals some characteristic types of metaphorical EAT expressions in which the eater is the sufferer of a particular action. The metaphorical meaning extension of the LV *xordan* in this category may denote physical damage where the subject is directly damaged by a hit (in a harmful manner) from an external agent (beat, kick, whip, slap, fist, etc.), or by environment and not a conscious external source (shock, wound, setback).

30) *bače az pedar-aš sili-ye mohkami xord*

bache from father-POSS slap-GEN strong eat-PST-3SG

The child got a heavy slap from his father.

31) *del-aš az harf-hā-ye mardom zaxm xord-e ast*

heart-POSS-2SG from word-PL-GEN people wound eat-PTCP-is

‘His heart is injured from people’s words.’

The subject can also be hurt and wounded by a sharp penetrating weapon or an instrument of violence (usually a hand held weapon).

32) *hafte gozašte dar yek dargiri dar xyābān, čāqu xord*

week last in one conflict in street, knife eat-PST-3SG

‘Last week, in a conflict in street, he was stabbed by a knife.’

Moreover, the hurt may be through a projectile weapon as:

33) *dar zamān-e jang, čand xāne dar širāz mušak xord*

in time-GEN war, several house in Shiraz missile eat-PST-3SG

‘During war, several houses in Shiraz were hit by missiles.’

On the other hand, in some other cases, the subject may be the target of a quick repetitive hit by a heavy blunt instrument.

34) *in felez xeili čakoš xord-e ast, kamelan saf shod-e ast*

this metal much hammer eat-PTCP-is, completely soft become-PTCP-is

‘This metal has been hammered quite a bit, it has been completely flat.’

This category may also involve subjects that are the target of verbal aggressions. They express verbally transferred psychological damage on the part of subject.

35) *az pedar-aš fohš/harf-e zyādi xord*

from father-POSS-3SG scolding/word-GEN much eat-PST-3SG

‘He got much scolding from his father.’

5.6 Undergoing Torment: Eat Grief, Eat Envy, Eat Defeat, Eat Trick, Eat Cold, Eat Hunger

Table 6. [+animate, -agentive] eats [+abstract]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| [+animate, -agentive] | [+abstract] | [being affected by/undergoing/receiving the influence of (condition/emotion)] |

This category of LVCs involves the suffering effect of a process or physical/emotional condition creating an unintended negative result of an action. Verb *xordan* in this construction mostly denotes a durational condition, an atelic activity LV.

The figurative meaning extension of verb may express a durational suffering from a negative emotional state which is the result of someone’s personal action or life experience.

36) *pedar va mādar-hā hamiše qose zendegi-ye bače-hā rā mi-xor-and*

father and mother-PL always grief life-GEN child-PL ACC PROG-eat-3PL

‘Parents always worry about their children’s life.’

Moreover, the metaphorical extension of *xordan* may be resulted from a natural physical condition leading to a bodily damage or suffering. The construction refers to the more general condition or process (*sarmā xordan* ‘cold eat’, *gij xordan* ‘dizziness eat’), rather than its specific consequences or symptoms (**sorfe xordan* ‘caugh eat’, **sargije xordan* ‘whirling round’).

37) *be xātere bi-kār-i sāl-hā gorosnegi xord-e ast*

to due unemployed-GEN year-PL hunger eat-PTCP-is

‘Being jobless for years, he has been suffered from hunger.’

Another type of this category is when the subject undergoes a negative process affected by an underhand action like ‘trick’.

38) *ba'd az sāl-hā fahmid ke farib xord-e ast*

after from year-PL understand-PST-3SG that trick eat-PTCP-is

‘After years, he found he had been tricked.’

5.7 *Being Affected by Entities, Damaged/Spoiled by X: Eat Weld, Eat Patch, Eat Foot, Eat Needle, Eat Dust, Eat Rust, Eat with X*

Table 7. [-animate, +patientive] eats [-abstract]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-------------------------|-------------|--|
| [-animate, +patientive] | [-abstract] | [being affected/damaged by entities, being suited/matched match] |

In this category, the meaning extension emphasizes the subject to be connected to some parts of itself or some other objects via a natural environmental mechanism (dampness, rust, etc.) rather than being the consequence of a conscious intended event. The pre-verbal nominal in this LVC involves the type of connection or instrument which is applied to join entities.

39) *in do giyā kamelan be ham peivand xord-e-and*

this two plant completely to each other graft eat-PTCP-3PL

‘These two plants have completely been grafted.’

The subject may also receive somehow a damaging effect from a sharp instrument or body parts creating some unintended marks on its surface. The resulted surface is not regarded as hurt but as *dast xorde* (touched).

40) *in qāliče now nist, xeili pā xord-e ast*

this rug new NEG-is, much foot eat-PTCP-is

‘This rug is not a new one, it has been hit much with feet.’

The LVCs may denote being damaged or spoiled by some natural phenomenon, leaving usually a negative undesirable effect on the subject.

41) *tamām-e ketāb-hā dar qafase xāk xord-e-and*

all-GEN book-PL in shelf dust eat-PSTP-are

‘Dust has entered all the books in the book shelves.’

The EAT expression may also express the concept of being suited or matched with certain entities in the construction denoting the LV extension of Eat with X meaning.

42) *in pirāhan be in šalvār ne-mi-xor-ad*

this shirt to this pant NEG-PROG-eat-PST-3SG

‘This shirt doesn’t suit/match these pants.’

5.8 *Being Affected by Force, Hit/Collide: Eat Dampness, Eat Cold, Eat Heat, Eat Earth, Eat {To, On} Each Other, Eat {To, Upon} Each Other, Eat {To, Upon} Somebody*

Table 8. [-animate, +patientive] eats [+abstract]

| Subject | Object | Concept |
|-------------------------|-------------|--|
| [-animate, +patientive] | [+abstract] | [being affected by force/ unintentional hit/collide] |

The LVCs may express some degree of force via environmental condition or process with an inanimate subject affected. The natural condition might cause both positive effect or entail some serious damage on entity.

43) *lebās-hā-yaš rā pahn kard tā āftāb bexor-and*

cloth-PL-POSS.3SG ACC wide do.PAST.3SG till sun eat-3SG

‘He put his clothes in the sun shine to dry’

44) *surat-ash tā bād xord sarmā xord*

face-POSS-3SG till wind eat-PST-3SG cold eat-PST-3SG

‘She caught a cold as soon as the wind touched her face.’

The effect may denote unintentional positive or negative consequences with meaning extension of LV as hit/collide.

45) *sar-aš be sang xord*

head-POSS-3SG to stone eat-PST-3SG

‘He faced an obstacle.’

46) *dust-am be zamin xord*

friend-POSS-1SG to earth eat-PST-3SG

‘My friend fell down.’

47) *dar dānešgah hič kas-i be češm ne-mi-xor-ad*

in university no body-GEN to eye NEG-PROG-eat-3SG

‘Nobody is seen in the university.’

The following examples, moreover, denote the LV extensions of EAT concepts on the basis of the patterns EAT {to, on} each other, EAT {To, Upon} each other, EAT {To, Upon} somebody respectively

48) *hāl-aš az qazā-ye diruz be ham mi-xor-ad*

feeling-POSS-3SG from food-GEN yesterday to each other PROG-eat-1SG

‘Because of yesterday’s food, he feels like vomiting.’

49) *dusti-šān be ham xord-e ast*

friendship-POSS-3PL to each other eat-PSTP is

‘Their friendship has been disturbed.’

50) *dar hengām-e xarid be mo’alem-am bar-xord-am*

in time-GEN shopping to teacher-POSS-1SG upon-eat-PST-1SG

‘While shopping, I bumped into my teacher.’

Therefore, *xordan* as a LV implies a particular meaning that manifests itself in specific LVCs. The various meanings of *xordan* are determined by specific properties of its certain pre-verbal elements along with the construction in which they occur. The pre-verbal and LV make certain groups or clusters of LVCs with highly related semantics. In other words, each group includes a certain LV, a type of pre-verbal element carrying particular attributes as physical, mental, and experiential, and the meaning implied by the construction itself. The whole meaning depicts syntactic and semantic information which is not fully predictable from the meaning of each isolated constituent.

As this study demonstrates, the meaning extensions of LVCs with *xordan* encompass the concepts related to metaphorical units as being affected, undergoing torment, exploiting, and displaying motion. The mappings and sub-mappings of LV *xordan* can visually be presented in the following figure depicting the lexical-semantic classification of this LV in a radial category in our analysis.

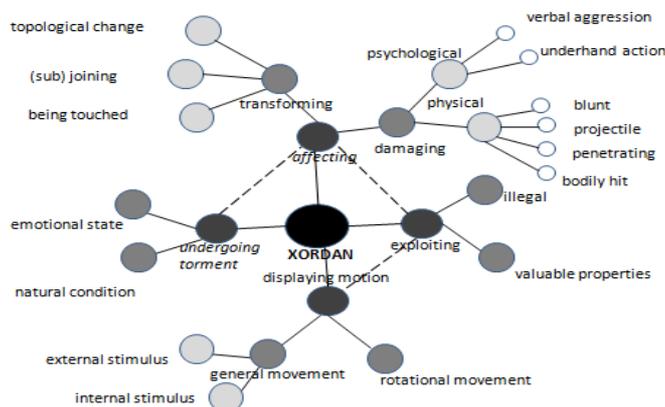


Figure 3. *Xordan*'s lexical network.

The metaphorical LVCs of *xordan* fall into some major categories of more central members or main conceptual mappings. These major semantic mappings of LV are further divided into sub-mappings, or less central cases bearing common semantic notions. The metaphorical expressions cannot be fully understood via their own single senses; they are generally comprehended through their relationship (in a radial structure model) to the central actual model of eating process.

The darkest circle in the center indicates the central category—the primary conceptual domain through which the most actual facts about the concept are identified, and other circles represent other, non-central attributes of the category indicating part of the meaning. The degrees of the more central members to the less central ones are graded through the grey scales of the concepts, from the darkest grey to white illustrating the prototype effect of items in the category. The darkest central circle introduces the best example, and the next circles immediately linked to the center show the most prototypical members. The less dark cases indicate the members with less prototypicality, and the blank circles are representative of the members with the least prototypical examples in the category. The dotted lines connecting the category members represent the relationship in the meaning extensions of the cases.

6. Concluding Remarks

The findings show that Persian involves a specific syntactic-semantic structure in a cognitive radial-based category in the case of light verb *xordan* manifesting its various metaphorical transfers. The main thing to be noticed here is that the meaning extensions of *xordan* highlights a close link and correspondence to earlier prototype meaning of the verb 'eat' which has radiated different but interrelated abstractions outward from the conduit of its concrete experiential reality.

It is evident that most of the cross-cultural divergences of metaphor conceptualization occur at the specific level, while similarities can be found at the generic or super ordinate level as it is investigated in various studies (see e.g. Lixia & Eng, 2012). In other words, the metaphorical language would not result merely from certain universal conceptual mappings, but a variety of factors as language-specific, socio-cultural, and historical realities of a language community affect or interfere with these projections. For instance, the dominant concept of 'undergoing, suffering, and enduring adversity' included in Persian food-related metaphors seems to illustrate the possible influence of socio-cultural phenomenon in the metaphorical expressions containing the verb *xordan* 'to eat'. It seems that Persians' belly is the seat of negative emotions together with an abdomen centering metaphor conceptualization. There is an abundance of eating expressions in Persian in which the 'eater' experiences the suffering of an action or tolerates violence by an instrument. The researchers' hypothesis is that 'adversity' would be a cultural preference in the history of the Persian society and language leaving ample room for our interpretations of the Persians' unique way of thinking and mind.

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