

# Conceptualizations of Mazeh 'Gustatory Sense': A Cultural Linguistic Study

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## Abstract

This paper aims to scrutinize conceptualizations of gustatory sensation in contemporary Persian cultural pragmatic schema from a perspective of Cultural Linguistics. Several expressions in which gustatory terms are used reflect cultural metaphors where gustatory is used as a primary domain for conceptual mapping to the domain of emotion. Conducting a corpus-based analysis according to schematic's model conceptualization of cultural cognition developed by Sharifian, this study indicates how gustatory sensation as English equivalent for Mazeh is conceptualized. This study also examines particular cultural categorizations of food. Human nature pertains to the concept of 'gustatory' in Persian and traces back the root of these categorizations to Iranian culture. The gustatory terms are also used to describe and categorize some things such as color and smell. All in all, the observations made in this paper support the view those conceptualizations of gustatory supply an interface for the interaction between sensory and bodily experiences (embodiment), human conceptual faculties, and cultural conceptualizations.

**Keywords:** Cultural Linguistics • Cultural conceptualizations • Cultural metaphor • Gustatory terms Persian

## Introduction

The gustatory perception demonstrates the intense emotions of gustatory modality; one of the most significant aspects of human experience emotion is related to intense displeasure or pleasure. Sense of taste is a synergetic mechanism for testing the food we were consuming. It helps us as a matter of survival. On the basis of transported information from the tongue to the brain, at least the four essential qualities of tastes feel such as sweet, salty, bitter, and sour. Incidentally, the sense of something as "spicy" or "hot" is often described as a taste. More precise, this is just a pain signal sent by the nerves that transmit touch and temperature sensations. Gustatory terms are intercommunicated with meanings that fall beyond the realm of sense of taste itself, such as emotion. Besides, it is usually implied that this phenomenon is intended as a 'semantic extension.' From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics maintained by gustatory concepts make one possible set of cultural metaphors [1-3]. Hence, they are realized as a source domain for conceptual mapping onto other domains such as emotion. Those parts of cultural metaphors associated with gustatory sensation are based on particular cultural traditions and beliefs. According to many studies have done in cognitive linguistic research Within discussions have taken place as to whether or not such conceptualizations are based on metonymic extensions, as well as the extent to which they may be universal [4-6]. Accordingly, many Cultural Linguistics have found

which conceptual metaphors, such as those involving the body, are culturally constructed [1,2,7-10]. Since the gustatory sense's experience is universal and we all feel a gustatory sense, it seems that taste's conceptualizations generally pertain to our bodies, as well as to cultural contexts and traditions. Notably, from the perspective of cultural Linguistics, and based on observations made in this study, the conceptualization of gustatory perception, while culturally constructed and entirely transformational of our perception of a biological substrate, nevertheless still relies upon it. The gustatory sense is perceived by our tongue that is the sensory organ. Nevertheless, the experience of gustatory sensation is categorized according to how our language classifies taste. We also use these conceptual categories of gustatory sensation further in our experience's conceptualization, for instance, by mapping them onto other domains such as emotion, and also in this study, specific values are associated with our conceptualizations, many of which are culturally constructed.

## Statement of the problem

The current study reviews cross-linguistic studies of gustatory perception terms by focusing on Persian and scrutinizes some conceptualizations that underlie the use of Persian expressions that consist of gustatory perception terms. This study initially renders some background information about the Persian language before introducing gustatory sensation terms in

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**Received:** October 18, 2021; **Accepted:** November 01, 2021; **Published:** November 08, 2021

Persian. Afterward, it discusses how those terms are used in pertinent to three sides of the emotion's domain: State, attribute, and quality. Specific categorizations of food and human nature based on gustatory terms rooted in the Iranian Traditional Medicine are explored. Regarding this paper, some other examples of the use of gustatory sense terms in meaning-making in Persian are presented.

## Cultural linguistics framework

Sharifan remarks that Cultural Linguistics is a discipline with multidisciplinary origins that explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualizations [1,2,11]. Particularly, Cultural Linguistics has stated the features of human languages that encode culturally constructed conceptualizations of human experience. Cultural Linguistics offers both a theoretical framework and an analytical framework for investigating the cultural conceptualizations underlying the use of human languages. Sharifan declares that cultural Linguistics has illustrated several other disciplines and sub-disciplines to develop its theoretical basis [1,8]. More specifically, as asserted in many studies, the notion of cultural cognition has represented a unified understanding of the concepts of 'culture' and 'cognition' related to language [12-15]. Cultural cognition implies a multidisciplinary understanding of cognition that moves beyond the individual mind's level and mental representation. According to Cowley, cultural cognition is a kind of enactive cognition due to interactions between individuals across time and space [16,17]. Considerably, as Hutchins maintained, cultural cognition is not equally shared by speakers across a speech community but is a form of (heterogeneously) distributed cognition [18]. Speakers demonstrate diversifications and differences in their access to and internalization of cultural cognition. Also, cultural cognition is remembered as dynamic in that it is continuously being discussed across generations and through contact with other speech communities. The concept of 'culture,' associated with linguistic relativity, is different from the perception of cultural cognition.

## Gustatory sense terms in Persian

The Persian word for gustatory sensation is Maze, and the language has a relatively simple system of categorization for gustatory sensation. The word Cheshaii, "taste" may also be used to refer to gustatory sense, primarily when used in the expression Hes-e-Cheshaii, "gustatory sensation, and "meaning" taste sensation." The main categories of gustatory sensation in Persian are as follows (Table 1):

**Table 1.** Persian gustatory sensation terms (adjectives and nouns) and their english equivalents.

Persian gustatory sensation terms (adjectives) and their english equivalents	Persian gustatory sensation terms (nouns) and their english equivalents
Shirin (sweet)	Shirini (sweetness)
Shoor (salty)	Shoori (salt)
Torsh (sour)	Torshi (sourness)
Talkh (bitter)	Talkhi (bitterness)

It should be noted that these main classifications of gustatory sensation can be modified to express a broader range of tastes. E.g., intensifiers can be used to express a heightened level of a particular consistency. For example, the Persian expression "Abi e Talkh "(blue+bitter) means "dark blue" and so "strong blue," which is a lexical configuration to express heightened degrees of consistency in Persian.

## Methodology

The data of this study were collected in this Corpus-based analysis paper that Corpus is a collection of expressions, come from the Dehkhoda Dictionary Persian sources [19]. The 16-volume Dehkhoda Dictionary, printed in 1931, is the most comprehensive and noticeable Persian dictionary published so far. The dictionary's entries are based on lexicology and various other scientific fields and are regularly being updated and extended by a group of experts.

## Results and Discussion

### Persian conceptualizations of gustatory sensation terms

In many languages, gustatory terms are applied to conceptualize various domains of experience, such as the emotion domain. Whereas emotional experience is an abstract concept, representing the neurological processes is not accessible, leading to its generation. Instead, body schema and sensory experiences are used to conceptualize and talk about emotions. For instance, many studies in many languages have indicated emotional experiences conceptualized as taking place somewhere in the body, such as the body organ term Del which can be intended as the seat of emotion [8,20]. Thus, the domain of gustatory is another domain that, in some languages, serves as the source domain for conceptualizations of emotion. Persian also makes extensive use of gustatory words concerning the domain of emotion. This study elaborates on the Persian use of gustatory terms concerning three aspects of the domain of emotion: emotional states, emotional attributes, and emotional qualities.

### Gustatory sensation terms and emotional states

Lakoff and Kövecses identify two sub-metaphors about the conceptualization of anger as heat: initially, anger is fire and anger in the heat of a fluid in a container [3]. Accordingly, such conceptualizations are rather metonymic and, therefore, universal in that they reflect one of the physiological symptoms that accompany anger: an increase in body temperature. In several languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, Hungarian, and English, views of similar conceptualizations lead to support this view [5,6]. However, Geeraerts have mentioned the possibility that such conceptualizations are stating the four humors' ethnomedical tradition and, therefore, culturally constructed [21]. Surrounded by the framework of four humors, emotions are related to fluids inside the body.

In the realm of 'emotional states,' gustatory terms do have positive and negative connotations.

It should be remarked that in the domain of gustatory sensation, terms such as Talkh, "bitter" do not have any inherently positive or

negative values when they are used literally. It is the context in which they are used that indicates a pleasant or unpleasant connotation. For instance, a Sokot e Talkh (silence-biter) refers to biter silence in every situation for representing objections, and Tanz e Talkh (quip-bitter) signal unpleasant in society. 'Tanz e Talkh' means satire in which tries to express Shortcomings in the ridicule expression way, as a matter of choice, with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement. Hence, its higher purpose is often constructive social criticism. Hekayat e Shirin (tale- sweet) means remarkable and audible story, and Shirin Zendegani (sweet-living) implies a convivial person how has a happy life.

Following expressions are used to signify how the gustatory terms represent contention. Such as Shoresh (salty) means insurgency; Shor o Bala (salty and calamity) refers to creating sedation and chaos. Furthermore, Shor Bardashtan (salty+pickup) or Shor Be Pa Kardan (salty+inaugurate) imply taking the fight and strife while Shor Az Kesi Dar Avordan (salty from someone redacts) takes defeating someone as cause moan and revenge them.

The gustatory word Shor can be used to refer to exceed and ultraism in something (e.g., emotional) Shor e Chizi Ra Daravordan (pickup salty from something). One might add some objects to gustatory terms such as Selah Shor (weapon+salty), in which this expression declares attributes of chivalry and errantry of someone. Occasionally gustatory terms Shor used in the sense of washing something. Consider the following expressions:

Ghali Shor (carpet+salty) refers to someone who washes the carpet. Lagan Shor (bedpan+salty) this expression refers to belittle the nurses' status. Takhteh Shor (board+salty) indicates the Author's notes. Morde Shor (corpse+salty) is a literary dead person washer. It is used as a Short version of the common expletive Persian expression of Mord e Shor Bordeh (corpse+salty+convey), literally "that the dead person washer takes you away" refers to Damm or "go die" or "go to hell." The expression Morde Shor Khaneh (dead person washing home) refers to a location that is commonly found in all Muslim and Jewish Sabians and Baha'is cemeteries that believe in the washing of the dead. Gorb e Shor Kardan Chizi (cat+salty+something) means clean up something carelessly, unfinished and dirty. The gustatory term sweet (Shirin), refers to having the right talent for writing as Shirin Ghalam (sweet+pen) with a positive connotation. Conversely, this gustatory term occasionally has a negative connotation as Shirin bodan nan (being sweet bread) that is sardonic of famine.

Gustatory terms are used in Persian in association with the body-part terms or body organ terms such as Maghz (brain), Abro (brow), Zaban (tongue), Cheshm (eyes), Kam (mouth), Ghiafeh (face), Pa (feet), Ghadam (step), Gam(step), Dast(hand), Posht (back), Sar (head), Gosh (ears), Gosht (flesh), Ashk (tear), and Del, in which according to what remarks that del physiologically refers to the abdomen but also figuratively refers to the heart [8]. Many Persian expressions reflect conceptualizations of Del as the seat of emotion, desire, thought, character, and courage. As for the use of gustatory terms in conjunction with Del, Shor Dar Del Oftadan (falling salty in the heart) means being anxious about something. Shirin Oftadan dar del kasi or Shirin Oftadan (sweet falling in the heart of someone) and Shirin amadan be chasm (sweet comes to the eyes) means being "pleasant" or "delightful." Shirin Maghz or Shirin Aghl (sweet+brain)

may be translated as "absent-minded," "confused," harebrained." Note that "Shirin Maghz or Shirin Aghl" in English refers to someone how doing something wrong. Abro Torsh o Shirin (brow +sour and sweet) and Abro Talkh (brow+bitter) means a state of anger and pleasure and suggest ill-humored. Ashk e Shor (tear +salty), Ashk e Talkh (tear+biter), and Geryeh Talkh (cry+bitter) reflect the conceptualization and innuendo of tears of grief and secession. The body organ term Ro (face) can add to Persian gustatory terms and create Shirin Shamayel (sweet+face). Shirin Ro (sweet+face) refers to shapely or gorgeous, Torsh Ro (sour +face)and Talkh Ro (bitter +face) implies bad-tempered and fractious man, Ro Shor (face+salty), or Sefidab refers to Persian cosmetic tools as skin whitener thereto. Two expressions of Shor Dar Sar (salty in the head) and Sar e Por Shor Dashtan (having head full of salty) describe someone with enthusiasm, Cheshm e Shor(eyes+salty) or Shor Cheshmi (salty+eyes) or Shor Dideh (salty +eyes) means Evil eyes, many cultures believe in evil eyes, in which receiving the evil eyes will get misfortune or injury. The body organ terms pa (feet, step) and dast (hand) present as a seat of portent such as Shor Dast (salty+hand), Shor Ghadam (salty +footstep), or Shor Pa (salty+foot), and gam-e Shor(step+salty) =or Dastgah e Shor = Is one of the seven Dastgah (category) of Persian cultural music. Sar Shor (head+salty), as traditional hair-washing detergents such as henna and cedar are used. Gosh Shor (ears +salty) is one of the medical devices by which the ear was washed. The gustatory terms would as negative or positive emotion sanguine, and disappointment such as Shirin Kam (sweet+mouth) delineates an individual who lives in harmony conversely, Talkh Kam (bitter+palate) represent someone who does not enjoy life. Besides, gustatory sensation Shor (salty) may be associated with a whole range of feelings, emotions, and excitement. Such as Shor o Ghogha (salty+clamor) refers to storms and stress. Shor Be Pa Shodan (observing salty) means sedition. Shor Bar Amadan Az Jaei (arising salty somewhere) connotes making loud demands and clamor. Shor Mahshar Be Pa Kardan, or Shor o Nashor (establishing doomsday) is another associated conceptualization of sound loudly and sonorously. Shor o Hayajan (salty+tempest) implies excitement, besides gustatory emotion sensation, can be the seat of love, for instance, Shor Asheghi (salty+love affair) and Shor e Eshgh (salty+love), which express love and romantic state. Other conceptualizations of gustatory sensation Shor in association with emotions include nettlesome and agonizing feel, on the other hand, the selection of the gustatory term refers to the harmful/unpleasant emotional state of the person, for instance, Ranj o Shor (affliction+salty), Dard o Shor (pain+salty), Eshgh e Talkh (love +bitter) is caused by negative emotion of experience of disappointed love, namely.

### **Gustatory sensation terms and the categorization of food, vegetable, and human beings**

Gustatory terms, in particular, Torsh (sour) and Talkh (bitter), are also used in Persian to categorize edible things, such as food and vegetable. For example, Ash e Torsh is categorized in the food cluster as cultural Persian potage. At the same time, Talkh Jok (chicory), known by the name cichorium itybus, is categorized as a traditional medicinal plant. In terms of universality versus culture-specificity, gustatory sensation-related metaphors in Persian are

open to being understood as culturally made on the warp and woof of a medical tradition. This language was also very much influenced by the theory of the four humors through the works of Avicenna. The theory of the four humors by Avicenna is the foundation of Iranian Traditional Medicine (ITM) [22]. People may also be categorized as having bitterness, sourness, sweetness, and salty nature. These classifications have provided Persian speakers with a traditional medicine approach to people's health and behavior problems. Hence, people diagnose each other's rather mild illnesses due to a kind of gustatory tendencies imbalance. By increasing yellow bile, it is believed to cause bitterness in the mouth In Persian. Several common expressions disclose conceptualizations similar to those referred to above, such as Talkh Kami (bitterness in mouth) that someone who is also Talkh Kam or Talkh Tabe becomes fractious and angry very quickly, within the framework of ITM, which is consistent with the four humor theory. Traditionally Persian speakers would describe a bad-tempered and quick-tempered person as Safrâ-yi "with Safrâ tendencies or Talkh Tabe or Talkh Kam." Increasing the blood causes sweetness and redness in the mouth mean such as Shirin Tabe (sweet humor), or Damavi tendencies mean someone with sanguine behavior also, Increasing the phlegm causes sourness and whiteness in the mouth refer to someone with Torsh Tabe (sour humor), or Balghami tendencies means having fretful behavior. Finally, Increasing Soda Causes Saltiness and blackness in the mouth, such as Shor Mazaj (salt humor), or Soda tendencies are about someone who is phlegmatic with callous or unemotional behavior. The above conceptualizations of food as having gustatory terms in tendencies have their root in Iranian Traditional Medicine (ITM), influenced by the traditional theory of the four humors [22]. Avicenna, who extended the theory of the four humors in his book *The Canon of Medicine* (1025), focuses on this issue. Accordingly, ITM would be in debt for much of its current understanding of the work of Avicenna. According to Sharifan, Temperature concepts play a pivotal role in four humors and ITM theory in general [2]. Hence, according to this system, the gustatory sensation has a prominent effect on 'natures' (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Four elements, structural components, feature, and gustatory tendencies.

Element	Structural component	Feature	Gustatory term
Fair	Bile	Warm and dry	Bitterness
Air	Air blood	Warm and wet	Sweetness
Water	Water phlegm	Cold and wet	Sourness
Soil	Soil black bile	Cold and dry	Salty

According to pre-nominated cases of ITM reveals its system of categorization based on gustatory sensation. In the above chart, the nature elements show constituents of all the things in nature, such as human and non-human beings. By eating food, it turns into structural components, and these components have gustatory tendencies. Therefore, people are also classified as hot or cold according to their nature. As maintained by Shahab, in the humoral theory, people are categorized regarding their dominant body fluid. People with a dominant Hot (bitterness and sweetness gustatory tendencies) humor are known as sanguine temperament: Hot and Moist and choleric temperament in which is hot and dry were

recognized as a hot nature [23]. The people with a dominant cold (sourness and salty gustatory tendencies) humor known as a melancholic temperament that is cold and dry and Phlegmatic temperament in which cold and moist were considered to have a cold nature. This point of view demonstrates how food and gustatory sensation in modern Persian is culturally categorized by its roots in the Iranian medical tradition. Galen (AD 131–200) explored the physiological reasons for different behaviors in humans and linked them to hot/cold-dry/wet temperaments from the four elements. The theory of four humors has influenced Iranian, Indian, Chinese Traditional Medicine.

The gustatory sensation may also reflect some human attributes such as Khon Shirin (blood+sweet), Gosht Talkh (flesh+bitter). The former refers to attraction and grace in behavior, and the latter refers to moral outrage.

Gustatory sensation terms and emotional attributes gustatory sensation terms are also used in Persian to describe certain emotional attributes of individuals. Goftar Shirin (speech+sweet), Shirin Sokhan (sweet+utterance), Shirin Goftar (sweet+sermon), Shirin Kalam (sweet+language), Shirin Ebarat (sweet+expression), Shirin Goei (sweet+say) and Shirin Khatab (sweet+address) it would be possible to describe someone well-spoken, Talkh Harfan (bitter+words) Sokhan Talkh Goftan (utterance+bitter+talk), Torsh Goeii (sour+say) refer to acrimonious utterance and speech.

Besides emotional attributes, gustatory sensation terms have been used merely for denominating beloved or darling. For example, Shirin khaton (sweet+lady) refers to allure lady Shirin Pesar (sweet+son) implies an attractive boy, Shirin Ghalandar (sweet+young man) refers to a handsome gentleman, Shirin Sefat (sweet+adjective) means one with the favorable appellation, Shirin Sanam (sweet+idol) that is a popular nickname. Also, Shirin Ghaba (sweet+cassock) refers to having a salient dress.

These expressions Khater Shirin Dashtan (having sweet mind) means having good memories, Fekr Shirin (thought+sweet) means having a good idea about something, Jan e Shirin (life+sweet), Ravan Shirin (psyche+sweet), Shiin Ravan (sweet+psyche) Shirin Nafs (sweet+breath) which refer to life. Besides, Talkh Khater (bitter+mind), Talkh Kho (bitter+habit) are associated with bad temper and memory, may allude to thoughts and memories.

It must be remarked here that in Persian culture, people believed in fate; on the other hand, Iranian believe in good luck and bad luck. Then gustatory sensation terms are associated with this mental conceptualization, roughly similar to the conceptualization of good or bad luck in English. Such as Shor Bakht (salty+fortune), Shor Dolat (salty+government), Akhtar Shor (star+salty). All these expressions refer to infelicitous fate or unhappy conceptualizations.

Gustatory sensation terms, sensory perception, and other miscellaneous target domains

Gustatory terms are also intercommunicated with certain aspects of sensory perception in Persian. For instance, colors may be categorized as strong or warm, with Sabz-e Talkh (green+bitter) as an example of a warm and dark green color. Likewise, gustatory terms are used for expressing smell perfumes; Perfumes are also categorized as Shirin (sweet) or cold as well as Talkh (bitter) warm Smells. Other gustatory terms in Persian contain the following: Shirin Zabani (sweet+tongue) means becoming mellifluous.



In Persian, Shirin Kari (sweet+affair) may be used as an expression to refer to an individual who tries to appear funny and Harekat e Na Shirin (movement+not being sweet) but comes across as uninteresting.

Shor o Meshverat (salty+consultation) refers to consult and confer. Shor Bar (salty+load) and Shor Zamin (salty+earth), Shor Bam (salty+roof) mean a salty land or earth in which nothing grows.

## Conclusion

This study presented the linguistics and origins of cultural conceptualizations of terms describing the gustatory sensation in Persian. It reveals how gustatory terms provide a source domain for several conceptualizations associated with the domain of emotion. It also presents a discussion of the influence of Iranian Traditional Medicine (ITM) in categorizations of food, fruit, and human nature using gustatory terms as category labels. Overall- point, the observations of the current study support the views of human language use, such as gustatory terms indicate interactions between cultural conceptualizations, the human conceptual faculty, bodily experience (embodiment), and sensory perception. Expanding the perspective of the current cultural linguistics study supplies clues as to how deeply human and universal faculties are influenced by cultural conceptualizations of experience.

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**How to cite this article:** Karimi, Zaynab. "Conceptualizations of Mazeh 'Gustatory Sense': A Cultural Linguistic Study." *Arts Social Sci J* 12 (2021): 002.