

## Metaphorical Word-Formation Processes in Persian

Azam Estaji

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (Iran)

[estajiz@yahoo.com](mailto:estajiz@yahoo.com)

The present paper deals with the metaphorical word-formation processes in Persian in a cognitive framework. In this language many new simple, derived and compound words are formed by a metaphoric mechanism. What is of interest is that terms for parts of the body have a tendency to take part in this process.

Simple words (based on the concept of similarity) have become polysemous: *sar* (head), *gardan* (neck), *pošt* (back), ....

As for the derived words, there are about 20 affixes in Persian that add the meaning of “similarity” and “like-ness” to their roots. So the concept of similarity is the basis for forming many new derived words. Thus, the *-vare* affix in *mah-vare* (moon-like) for ‘satellite’ or the *-e* suffix which is added to many body-part terms to form new words where their referent is similar to these body-part terms: *cešm-e* (eye-like) for ‘spring’; *lab-e* (lip-like) for ‘edge’; *guš-e* (ear-like) for ‘corner’; *damâq-e* (nose-like) for ‘cape’; *dahân-e* (mouth-like) for ‘opening’; *riš-e* (beard-like) for ‘roots’ and ....

As for the compounds, there are three basic metaphoric types: compounds formed by a formal similarity to the referent of their constituents, compounds formed by a functional similarity and compounds formed by a formal-functional similarity to the referent of their constituents: *sang- pošt* (stone-back) for ‘turtle’; *šâh-rag* (king-vein) for ‘artery’ and *zaban-e madar sohar* (the tongue of mother-in-law) for naming a kind of cactus.

It seems that this process of forming new words and grasping new concepts based on the similarity to existing words and concepts lies at the heart of human cognitive abilities and so we expect to find it as a recurring word-formation process in human languages.

**KEYWORDS:**