



## Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors of Women in Iranian Legends

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### Abstract

In this research, Iranian fairy tales whose destination field is "woman" and words related to it are examined to use this theory in these stories and to know the source domains and destination domains of the widely used, cognitive characteristics, cultural and social constructions, worldviews and prevailing thoughts. In this research, 85 stories are analyzed, among which 128 conceptual metaphors with the destination domain of woman are extracted. Based on the research results in Iranian legends, 11 source domains, including plants, animals, objects, food, fruits, natural elements, etc., have been used to conceptualize woman. These source domains in relation to women sometimes carry a positive meaning such as the vitality and comfortingness of a woman, life-giving, unity and popularity, and sometimes a negative meaning such as evilness. They convey a oppressive and harmful nature about women. Finally, the prevailing attitude towards women in these legends is traditional and stereotyped.

**Keywords:** *conceptual metaphor of woman, Iranian legends and conceptual metaphors, The metaphor of women and girls in popular literature, Analysis of Iranian legends and literary theories.*

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**Extended Abstract****1. Introduction**

Cognitive Linguistics is one of the new trends in linguistics that was proposed in the 1970s. The main core of this type of linguistics is linguistic knowledge as a part of general human knowledge (Safawi, 2007: 364). Simultaneously with introduction of this theory, the metaphor has also been expressed as one of the central and main topics of this theory. Because in this theory, conceptual metaphors express the relationship between human mind and language (Afrashi et al., 2014: 44). In fact, conceptual metaphors that are examined in the layers of the mind are not completely represented in language, but are also present in the cultures and symbols of a nation. In cognitive theory, metaphors act as a tool to communicate different thoughts in the mind, which can be discovered and explained by examining the linguistic representations of conceptual metaphors such as patterns in the conceptual structure of words and metaphors. It turns (ibid.). Iranian legends express the intellectual, cultural and social foundations of a period, and studying them based on principles of cognitive theory and conceptual metaphors leads to the extraction and understanding of the intellectual and principles of its people. period and decade. Therefore, this research aims to understand and extract the dominant thoughts and ideological bases in the legends regarding the conceptual field of women by examining Iranian legends based on conceptual metaphor.

**Research Question(s)**

1. What are the conceptual metaphors related to the destination domains of women in Iranian legends?
2. Have the source domains and destination domains in Iranian legends in connection with the concept of woman been used to convey the prevailing thinking and ideology?
3. How is the position of women and the type of attitude towards it represented in Iranian legends?

**2. Literature Review**

Conceptual metaphor theory was put forward in a coherent way by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) with the publication of *Metaphors We Live By*. These two researchers introduced metaphor as one of the characteristics of the conceptual system of the human mind and considered it as a tool that can be used to gain a deeper understanding of world phenomena. Afrashi (2014: 42) points out that Lakoff in the

book *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (1987) and in the article "Contemporary Theory of Metaphor" (1993) expands and explains the theory of cognitive metaphor. In the field of conceptual metaphors and cognitive theory, researches have been conducted in Persian language, and each of these researches have paid attention to a specific conceptual field. For example, articles by Shahri (2012), Safavi (2003), and Rezaei and Moghimi (2015) have also explained this theory. One of the books is Safavi's book (2008), in parts of which cognitive topics and conceptual metaphors are discussed. In the field of conceptual metaphor related to the semantic field of women in poems and stories, many articles have been written, for example, the article "Conceptual metaphor of women in fiction literature of the eighties based on the approach of critical analysis of metaphor" by Asghari and others (2020), the article "Female Conceptual Metaphors in the Poems of Forough Farrokhzad and Ghada samman" by Zohrevand and others (2018), the article "Conceptual Metaphors of Women in the Poems of Forough Farrokhzad" by Ghasemi (2015) and others. It should be noted that no research has been done on conceptual metaphors in Iranian legends, especially in relation to the conceptual field of women

### 3. Methodology

In this descriptive-analytical research, the data were collected from the *Fables of Iranian Folklore* and analyzed in a quantitative-qualitative way. In fact, after the theory of cognitive linguistics and cognitive semantics was explained, based on this theory, along with the explanation of the conceptual metaphor and its function in Iranian legends, the stories that focus on the concept of woman are extracted and analyzed, which includes 85 stories from the book *Farhang-e Afsaneha-ye mardom-e Iran* (2000), volumes 5 and 6 by Ali Ashraf Darvishian and Reza Khandan. In following, a classification of conceptual metaphors in legends and an analysis of the dominant ideology in them are presented, and research questions are answered in the context of conceptual metaphor.

### 4. Results

Examining the metaphorical schemas of Iranian legends with the destination domain of woman reveals the prevailing view in these stories and legends about women. In other words, the concepts expressed in the source domains of these legends express the influence of the social and cultural conditions of Iran, which have been recorded

in the minds of different eras. Based on the research data, it was found that in Iranian legends, in order to conceptualize of the destination domain of woman, from the source domains such as plants, animals, food, fruits, objects, religion, demons and fairies, tools and devices and natural phenomena are used. In the schemas in these legends, the selected source domains such as objects, animals, plants and natural phenomena reveal the attitude of these legends towards women. Some areas of concrete origin, in connection with the concept of woman, express positive meanings such as the vitality and comfortingness of a woman, her passion and life-giving, her unity, her invigoratingness, her kindness, being oppressed, her chastity and her popularity. Sometimes, in some cases, reprehensible meanings have been drawn in connection with the concept of woman, such as being evil, sad, destructive, oppressive, harmful, etc.

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