

Food Metaphors in Tunisian Arabic Proverbs

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Abstract

This paper investigates food metaphors in Tunisian Arabic proverbs. This study is stimulated by the seemingly abundant presence of food terms in proverbs along with the relevance of this domain in metaphorical understanding. Focusing mainly on mapping across conceptual domains as a distinct feature of the metaphor theory (Lakoff, 1993) and the Great Chain Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Turner, 1989), the different target domains of the food domain will be sorted. The role of the embodiment theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999) in conceptualizing different abstract concepts as manifesting itself in the food experience will be highlighted. Three main conceptual metaphors: A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD, EMOTIONS ARE FOOD and LIFE IS FOOD were found to account for the understanding of many food proverbs.

Keywords: Metaphor, Metonymy, Mapping, Food domain, Embodiment

1 Introduction

This paper will study the different conceptualizations of food in Tunisian Arabic (TA) proverbs by studying the different metaphorical meanings of food-related terms. The study analyses the different meanings of food proverbs with a particular focus on the role of metaphor in accounting for the understanding of these proverbs. Food will be the source domain serving to conceptualize the target domains of personal traits and socio-cultural values. The embodied experiences associated with food points to the relevance of embodiment in accounting for proverbs understanding, hence evoking physical and cultural specifications. First we will start with a general introduction. Next, we will present a general background to proverbs studies focusing on some cognitive perspectives. Then, the methodology adopted to perform this study will be presented. After that, we will present and discuss the results of this study. Finally, we will end with a summary and a conclusion.

2 Proverbs studies

This section will start with a general introduction of proverbs. A particular focus on proverbs studies will then take place. Next, some of the cognitive studies of proverbs will be presented.

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Proverbs, together with other types of fixed expressions, are important in speech. They gain familiarity among speakers because they are considered the depository of the culture and the essence of accumulated experiences (Emrich, 1972). Proverbs seem to be embracing human concerns. They are mainly characterized by their shortness, concreteness, originality and their rhymed poetical utterances, which give them the generality and acceptance they enjoy (Mieder, 1999).

Studies of proverbial expressions can be divided into two broad classes. Studies focusing on the internal structure of proverbial expressions as well as their definitions and functions, which I called traditional studies of proverbs; and views concerned with accounting for people's understanding and use of proverbs, which I call cognitive studies of proverbs. The first subsection will briefly introduce some of the traditional views of proverbs. The second subsection will present different cognitive studies of proverbs focusing mainly on the Great Chain Metaphor Theory (GCMT).

2.1 Traditional views of proverbs

Traditional views of proverbs focused mainly on proverbs' definitions, functions and classification. Emrich (1972) focused on the theoretical complexity of defining a proverb, the common patterns underlying the structure of many proverbs and the stylistic devices characterizing proverbial utterances. Coffin and Cohen (1966) introduced proverbs as one facet of American folklore, classifying them according to their topics. Brunvand (1968) classified proverbs among folk speech, positioning them "one step up...on the scale of complexity in verbal folklore" (1968:74). Mieder (1999) investigated the popular view of proverbs, discussing ordinary people's definition of proverb. Mieder and Mieder (1977) studied the use of proverbs in advertising, focusing on the convenience of proverbial utterances to attract attention in advertising headlines and titles. The main concern of traditional views of proverbs was to identify proverbs among different types of folklore literature. Addressing human issues and targeting human concerns is the main characteristic of proverbial utterances (Brunvand, 1986). These expressions of wisdom reflecting accumulated experience (Emrich, 1972) should normally address human matters. This helps so much in enabling people to understand proverbs even out of a given context. Many English proverbs exhibit a range of stylistic devices. These features contribute to making proverbs fixed forms of expressions different from everyday language. In fact, "there are numerous stylistic devices in the proverbs and none are accidental" (Emrich, 1972: 63). Some of the "many figures of speech occur[ring]...in true proverbs" (Brunvand, 1986: 80) are meter as in '*A stitch in time saves nine*' (Brunvand, 1986), alliteration as '*Live and learn; Live and let live*', contrast as in '*A good beginning makes a good ending*' and contrast reinforced by parallelism as '*No news is good news*' (Emrich, 1972: 63). These studies attempted to define the proverb, to study the common structures of the proverbial utterances and to mention some of the proverb's functions in speech.

2.2 Cognitive studies of proverbs

While many studies focused rather on ways of classifying proverbs either thematically or stylistically, other studies paid attention to the famous question; how do we understand proverbs? Proverbs are thought to be descriptions of a particular situation that can be applied to a wide range of situations (Turner 1991, Lakoff 1993, Gibbs 1994, Lakoff and Turner 1989). The mapping of a particular kind of experience onto another different experience is one of the main characteristics of conceptual metaphor theory. Mapping one delineated domain of experience onto a not clearly delineated abstract domain lies at the basis of metaphorical thinking (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1993, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Turner 1989). We needed to wait for long to see Lakoff and Turner (1989) suggesting the GCMT as a theory capable, in their terms, to account for the understanding of proverbial expressions.

Originating essentially in the conceptual metaphor theory, the GCMT takes THE GENERIC IS SPECIFIC as the axis around which proverbs understanding revolves. This generic-level metaphor is presented to account for the metaphorical processes underlying the understanding of proverbs. Taking into consideration the particularities of proverbial expressions and their context of use, THE GENERIC IS SPECIFIC projects the general knowledge associated with the concrete text of the proverb to the situation at hand. This metaphor picks the generic-level information associated with the specific-level schema evoked in the text of the proverb then maps it onto a large number of specific-level schemas provided that they share this generic-level information. The role of this metaphor consists in “preserv[ing] the generic-level structure of the target domain, except for what the metaphor exists explicitly to change -in this case nothing- and imports as much as possible of the generic-level structure of the source domain -in this case everything” (Lakoff and Turner 1989:164).

The present study will adopt the principles of the conceptual metaphor theory. The choice of adopting a metaphorical investigation of TA proverbs goes back to different reasons. First of all, the scientific significance that the conceptual metaphor theory, with embodiment theory as a branch, gained in accounting for human conceptualisation of different types of experiences, places it as a suitable technique to provide the link between the literal and figurative meaning of proverbs. In fact, metaphor seems to provide part of the answer to the figurative meaning of many proverbial utterances. Besides, the mapping across domains stands at the heart of the metaphorical connection. This type of connection is very common in the text of many proverbs, especially when we know that most proverbs are description of a particular situation to be applied to a number of parallel situations (Gibbs, 1994). This positions mapping across domains, and specifically multiple mapping, as a basic tool underlying the understanding of many proverbs.

3 Methodology

This section will describe the methodology adopted in performing this study. I will start with a description of how the corpus was collected. Then, the theoretical framework adopted to analyse this data will be presented. Next, the food domain will be introduced and finally I will end with a conclusion.

Since this study is corpus-based, it investigates a selected list of proverbs. This metaphorical study will focus on the domain of food which explains the choice of thematic handling of proverbs. The proverbs selected deal essentially, whether directly or indirectly, with the food theme.

3.1 Data collection

The corpus consists of TA proverbs taken from books written on proverbs, which include food-related terms. We selected proverbs including keywords like eat, drink, food, meals, fruits, vegetables and liquids. Proverbs including organs associated with the eating process, namely tongue, mouth, and stomach were also collected. Along with these proverbs, we find others containing edible liquid terms such as oil, water and honey. These liquids will be considered as food. The corpus also includes verbs associated with the process of eating such as eat, drink, taste, swallow, devour, etc. Moreover, the food domain with its different patterns broadens the scope of the keywords to be included in the corpus, hence the existence of words referring to food types together with instrument used in the eating process.

Some books on proverbs (Belhaj Issa 1986, Khraief 2001, Metoui and Hannachi 2004) classify proverbs according to different themes like business, friendship, family relationships, celebrations, man and woman etc. In almost every theme, we can find many proverbs including food-related terms. Since proverbs are reflections of people's accumulated experiences, people's familiarity with food should reflect itself abundantly in proverbs.

The proverbs are taken from Balegh (1993, 1997, 1998), Belhaj Issa (1986), Khraief (2001), Rezgui (n.d.), and Metoui and Hannachi (2004). These books include lists of proverbs classified differently.

Food-related terms can be numerous since food is highly and extensively experienced by human beings. The eating process seems to be a sophisticatedly varied process including many patterns that go beyond the act of eating itself. The proverbs under investigation describe "the activity with its parts and the product [which will] serve as a deeply entrenched source domain" (Kovecses, 2002:18). The studied corpus includes 570 TA proverbs.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The collected data will be studied qualitatively. In this qualitative study, the conceptual theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), remains the axis around which this study revolves. The growing importance of the embodiment theory makes it a basic tool for undertaking most cognitive studies (Maalej 2004).

The qualitative study is meant to account cognitively for the use of the food-related terms in the corpus. Focusing mainly on mapping across conceptual domains as a distinct feature of metaphor theory (Lakoff 1993) and the GCMT (Lakoff and Turner 1989), we will analyse TA proverbs in terms of the mapping across domains. The qualitative analysis is supposed to check the application of the GCMT as a proverb-addressed theory to the collected data. This analysis should go beyond the application of this theory to deal with some proverbs included in the corpus. The analysis is meant to account for the metaphorical thinking governing the

understanding of many proverbs on the basis of three main conceptual metaphors; A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD, LIFE IS FOOD, and EMOTIONS ARE FOOD. This analysis should, as well, uncover the importance of the eating experience as a bodily experience shaping our conceptualization and understanding of different concepts.

As for the food domain, the present study will attempt to show the different metaphors underlying the food schema with its different patterns. The embodied experience of dealing with food will be given due importance since it constrains and defines our conceptualisation of less concrete experiences. The embodied experience of eating food, with its different patterns; tasting, seeing, desiring, smelling, digesting, etc. provide a tacit connection between embodied action and other abstract concepts. These different physical experiences grounds proverbs in metaphor, and metaphorical thinking based on embodied experiences seem to govern the understanding of many proverbs. Since we are most familiar with our bodies and the experiences of our bodies and because proverbs are essentially description of familiar highly experienced situations, proverbial utterances do not go too far from bodily experiences. Henceforth, proverbs should describe bodily experiences to gain familiarity and concreteness. Proverbs including food related terms seem to fit this condition with respect to the concreteness of the human experience with food. The present work will investigate how our bodies constrain and give insight to less concrete experiences (Johnson 1987, Lakoff and Johnson 1999) through experiences with food. Following Maalej (2004, forthcoming), the cultural embodiment of food will be highlighted.

The familiarity with and the concreteness of the food domain and the experience associated with it make it serve as a productive domain to facilitate the understanding of abstract domains. Metaphorical thinking proved to manifest itself abundantly in TA thanks to the work done by Maalej (1999, 2004). By analysing a number of linguistic metaphors, Maalej (1999) showed conceptual metaphors at work in the thought patterns of TA speakers. Following Lakoff and Johnson distinction between linguistic and conceptual metaphors together with their classification into three types namely structural, orientational and ontological (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), Maalej collected 80 linguistic metaphors from TA expressions and then tried to label the different conceptual metaphors arising from these expressions. To name a few, the metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD structures the understanding of expressions like *klaaha b-3aynih* (*He devours her with his eyes, i.e. He drank her with his eyes*), *matišba3š mil-Razran liha* (*You are never full up with looking at her, i.e. You cannot get enough of her*) (Maalej 1999:197). The domain of food is used here to structure knowledge about human traits. There is a mapping from the domain of food onto the domain of human beings. Studying metaphors involving the food domain with its different patterns highlighted the productivity of this source domain. Moreover, the embodied experiences associated with food, be it hunger, eating, tasting, or feeling satiated, structure much of our knowledge about less concrete experiences. This echoes plainly in some of the studied proverbs and will be developed in a later stage of this study.

4 Findings

This section will present and then discuss the results of studying TA proverbs metaphorically. In the first part we will show the GCMT at work in the thought patterns of speakers of TA and users of TA proverbs. Second, we will present the

different target domains of food domain in TA proverbs. Third, we will discuss to what extent the food domain is productive and the role that embodiment plays in accounting for the understanding of food proverbs.

4.1 The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC

Many TA proverbs can be analysed following the cognitive apparatus of the GCMT. It helps understand the specific-level schema that describes the particular rich image included in the proverb. The generic-level metaphor GENERIC IS SPECIFIC will then enable us to understand a range of different situations starting from the generic situation evoked in the text of the proverb (Lakoff and Turner 1989). To illustrate, consider the following TA proverb:

(1) *kaththar* *min* *l-asal* *yimSaaT*
 eat-IMP a lot of the honey [it] be-FUT not sweet
 ‘Honey in excess is no longer sweet.’

This proverb describes a generic situation dealing with the consumption of a given food. The salient feature of honey is sweetness. Honey is generically perceived as a prototypically sweet category. This proverb is supposed to convey the meaning of how exaggeration can turn qualities into drawbacks. This general meaning is extracted out of the generic situation evoked by the proverb. The generic-level information associated with the schema evoked by the proverb is as follows:

- There is a given food with an apparent quality.
- That food was consumed to benefit from its quality.
- The consumption of this food was not moderate.
- The excessive consumption was counter-effective.
- This quality should have been consumed with moderation in order not to lose essence.

Imagine a situation, in which a talented football player, who successfully dribbled three players, got the opportunity to give the ball to his team-mate to score a goal, but chose to continue dribbling and lost the ball to the other team. His coach may blame him saying, “Honey in excess is no longer sweet”.

The generic-level schema maps onto the specific level schema which makes the mapping specific.

- The food with an apparent quality i.e. honey corresponds to the dribbling of the player.
- The benefit from the food corresponds to the quality of dribbling players.
- The excessive consumption of honey corresponds to the excessive dribbling of players.
- The counter effect of excessive consumption corresponds to losing the ball for the other team instead of scoring a goal.

What is mapped here is knowledge about food with high nutritional effect, which is honey, to conceptualize dribbling. The Great Chain of Being plays an important role through classifying food lower than humans and the nature of things by selecting the highest properties of each level respectively, sweetness for food and positive

moral aesthetic qualities for human beings. The element mentioned in the text of the proverb to be placed in the Great Chain of Being is honey. This substance figures in the lower position in the hierarchal structure of the great chain. The distinct feature of this substance is a physical feature. Since it is the only highest feature of this substance, the only property of honey in this proverb is its physical feature. Honey is prototypically characterised by its sweetness in addition to its nutritional benefit. According to the nature of things, natural physical things will have a natural physical behaviour. Having a natural physical behaviour, honey will have a nutritional benefit when consumed with moderation. The combination of great chain and the nature of things will produce the following information about honey. The behaviour of honey as a liquid is different from that of water. Though belonging to the same class in the great chain, each substance has its own distinct feature that will define its behaviour. Being a tasteless vital liquid, water is consumed without any constraint. In order not to lose its nutritional value, honey should be consumed with moderation. Other food types together with other food experiences are exploited by TA proverbs to present a potentially generic knowledge to be mapped on numerous target domains.

4.1 The different target domains of food in proverbs

The food domain is almost fully exploited in TA proverbs to conceptualize human traits and socio-cultural values. With regard to its variety and the number of experiences associated with it (eating, tasting, digesting, hunger, satiation, desiring, cooking, preparing etc.), the food domain is enlisted in TA proverbs to conceptualize human affairs as best manifested in describing personal traits and socio-cultural values. The first subsection presents the human traits metaphorically conceptualized in terms of food while the second presents food in socio-cultural values.

4.1.1 Food in human traits

The food domain proves to be a very productive domain in the conceptualization of human moral traits. Many foods, whether in their natural state or cooked, are used to describe human traits. The delicious taste of a sweet food provides an experiential model for the conceptualization of human traits. Conversely, the disgusting taste of certain food types represents an active feature in people's understanding of moral attributes. In the text of some TA proverbs, human beings are featured in terms of food. These proverbs are best seen motivated by the generic metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD.

A human being is conceptualized in terms of food with the distinct feature of sweetness. In addition to its sweetness, honey is characterized by its nutritional benefit as well as its use as remedy for many health problems. Our experience with honey makes it a concrete source for conceptualizing the abstract characteristics of good behavior among human beings. Human beings are conceptualized in terms of a sweet food that should be either consumed with moderation [*(kaan SaHib-k asal ma ti-lsH-u-š l-koll*, 'If your friend is honey, do not lick all of [it]')] or that is best tasted

in the mouth [(*famma naas huma huma w maḏaa min naas ki l-3sal fi l-garjuuma*, Some people are as they are and other people are like honey in the throat)].

Similarly some present-day TA expressions frame human traits in terms of honey *fiaan 3sal id-dinya* (X is the honey of life), *ya 3asla* (hey, [honey]). Besides its framing of moral attitudes, honey is also used to characterize types of speech, particularly one that aims at persuading others [(*klaam ma3suul* ‘sweet words’)], the moral impact of certain actions *aHla 3la qalb-i mil-3sal* (it is sweeter to my heart than honey), *daxl-u fi qalb-i kiif niktit l-3asal* (They entered in my heart like a drop of honey does. Maalej, Forthcoming). Honey seems to be one of the most productive food types in TA, hence its frequent use in proverbs.

Honey is not, however, the only food type recruited to make sense of human traits. Sweet fruits are employed to characterize positive human moral attributes. While kindness and social acceptability of a person are framed in terms of a sweet food (honey, apple, and raisins), wickedness [(*iḏa ummi-k l-bSal w bu-k ith-thuum mniin tjii-k ir-riiHa eT-Tayb-a ya mšuum* ‘If your mother is onion and your father is garlic, how will you then smell good’)] and social rejection [(*kol šayy yi-taaddaa illa iD-Diif ir-rkiik* ‘Everything can be digested except the dull guest’)] are framed respectively in terms of a pungent bitter food with a sharp taste or heavy foods difficult to be digested. Sweetness of a food is conceptualized as generosity and kindness. Bitterness is, however, conceptualized as wickedness [(*illi aSl-u toffaaH la yu-jaaH w illi aSl-u difla la ya-Hla* ‘whose origin is apple never turns bitter and whose origin is oleander¹ never turns sweet’)]. These proverbs are motivated by the conceptual metaphors SWEET IS GOOD and BITTER IS BAD.

In addition to the change in taste of food, change in the nature of food is selected to conceptualize human differences in their social relationships. Easily eaten foods are recruited to conceptualize naïve and easily deceived people [(*lqaa-h 3siida l-lbal3aan* ‘He finds him porridge to swallow’)]. Porridge is known as a soft type of food that is devoured directly and its eating does not involve chewing inside the mouth. It is a easily eaten sweet food used to frame persons that are easily deceived. Being an instantiation of the generic metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD, this proverb can be a version of this metaphor and motivated by the metaphor A NAIVE PERSON IS AN EASILY EATEN/SWALLOWED FOOD. Soft foods serve to conceptualize inexperienced and easily trapped people. Conversely, foods that are hard to eat are recruited to characterize experienced persons that are difficult to be deceived. This difference between easily eaten food and hard to eat food is more apparent in everyday TA expressions. A human being is conceptualized in terms of a hard bone *fiaan aDam SHiiH* (He is a hard bone). Bones are cooked with meat but never eaten by human beings. They serve to conceptualize persons that are experienced and vigilant enough in their social relationships that they can never be “eaten” i.e. trapped or deceived. This metaphor is motivated by the metaphor A VIGILANT PERSON IS A TOUGH FOOD. In accordance with this, a person is perceived to have sweet meat[(*laHmt-i Hlu-wa* ‘I have sweet meat’)] when he is subject to people’s gossip and attacks. A person with bitter meat *laHm-i morr* (I have bitter meat)] is, however, someone capable of facing people’s attack and denouncing them. He is hardly subject to people’s attacks.

The food domain also serves to describe the opposed characteristics of obedience and obstinacy. People’s experiences with certain types of food provide an experiential model for people to perceive human internal moral characteristics. The

¹ The oleander is an evergreen tree known by its beautiful flowers and its very bitter fruits. The distinct feature of this plant is bitterness.

stubbornness and disobedience of a human being are framed in terms of the physical obstinacy of food when put in a container [(*iT-Tofla kima i-nnoxxala inti t-roS w hia t-fiD* ‘The girl is like bran, you press and it overflows’)]. The contradictory characteristics of obedience and obstinacy are conceptualized in terms of people’s experiences with food. Bran which is essentially a feed for animals is produced after grinding wheat and sieving it. This feed is known by its obstinacy when put into a container due to its spongy nature. This renders filling it into a container a difficult process. This proverb is motivated by the metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD. This proverb correlates physical resistance of a feed when put into container with the disobedience of girls. Another proverb [(*aHna l-lHam w inti is-sikkiin* ‘We are the meat and you are the knife to it’)] conceptualizes obedience in terms of the concurrent presence of meat and knife where the former corresponds to the obedient person and the latter to the person who gives orders. The manipulability of meat with a knife and the possibility of cutting it into pieces in different sizes provide a conceptualization of people’s readiness to follow orders and to be submissive to the will of other persons. This proverb is motivated by the metaphors A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD, A DISOBEDIENT PERSON IS A DIFFICULT TO MANIPULATE FOOD AND AN OBEDIENT PERSON IS AN EASILY MANIPULATED FOOD.

Changes in the taste and the physiological state of foods are not the only characteristics employed to conceptualize human traits –the difference between raw foods and cooked foods is also exploited. Highly experienced people are conceptualized in terms of cooked foods [(*qalb-i Taab w rasi šaab* ‘my heart is ripe and my head greyed’)]. This proverb is motivated by the conceptual metonymy PART OF THE BODY FOR PERSON with its two versions HEART FOR PERSON and HEAD FOR PERSON and the conceptual metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD. An experienced person that lived long is conceptualized in terms of a fully cooked food. Experience corresponds to the process of cooking. Thus, an inexperienced person is conceptualized in terms of raw food [(*flaan nayy* ‘X is unripe’)], a person who lacks experience is conceptualized in terms of half-cooked food [(*flaan naaqis Ralwa* ‘X is half-cooked’)], and mature experienced persons correspond to well-done food. The two preceding examples are not proverbs, but everyday TA expressions. They serve as further illustrations of the relevance of the food domain to expressing views about experience in TA.

The food domain serves to conceptualize interpersonal relations, especially relations within a family. The relationship of fraternal love is conceptualized in terms of honey tasted in the mouth [(*uxt-i min omm-i k-l-3asla fi fumm-i* ‘my maternal sister is like honey in my mouth’)]. Sweetness serves to conceptualize the emotion of fraternal love. The relationship between a woman and her sister-in-law is however conceptualized in terms of a bitter fruit [(*il-luz l-morr kassir w armii fi l-Hforr* ‘Bitter almonds² are to be cracked and thrown in holes’)]. Bitterness serves to characterize also the relationship between the wife and her rival wife [(*iD-Dorra morr-a* ‘the fellow wife is bitter’)]. Hate and jealousy generally characterise these two relations, since the two women compete to gain the man’s heart. The metaphors LOVE IS SWEET FOOD and HATE IS BITTER FOOD characterize the understanding of interpersonal relationships within a family together with the feelings involved therein.

In summary, food proverbs reveal that the generic metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD governs the understanding of many proverbial expressions about

² The sister-in-law for the wife in TA is called an almond.

human traits. A human being is either conceptualized in terms of a sweet delicious food hence his kindness and social acceptance or framed in terms of bitter tasteless food to conceptualize his wickedness and social rejection. Taste is not the only feature involved to make sense of human traits. The state and the manipulability of food are recruited to frame obedience, stubbornness, naivety and in some TA expressions vigilance. The food domain proves very productive in terms of featuring human traits. This productiveness will be further highlighted when dealing with the conceptualization of socio-cultural values in terms of food in TA proverbs.

4.1.2 Food in Socio-cultural values

TA proverbs describe many food experiences not only to frame human traits but also many other socio-cultural values. Because TA deals with a huge variety of socio-cultural values, our listing of these different values will be in pairs which are not necessarily opposites.

- **Emotion/Reason:** Sweet fruits are recruited to capture actions of a particular nature. For example, what is seemingly cruelty on the part of the beloved is positively perceived by the lover. It is conceptualized in terms of a sweet fruit [(*Darb l-Habiib zbiib w Hjaart-u rommaan* ‘The beating from the beloved is like eating raisins and his/her stones pomegranates’)]. The action is shaped by the performer and stones turn into apples [(*Hajra min yid l-Habiib tuffaaHa* ‘A stone from the beloved is an apple’)]. The understanding of these proverbs builds on this particularity in the sense that the beloved is considered to be a sweet person and consequently all his actions can only be sweet. This understanding arises from the metaphors A DESIRED PERSON IS SWEET FOOD and ACTIONS ARE LIKE THE PERSONS PERFORMING THEM and A SEEMINGLY NASTY BEHAVIOUR IS SWEET FOOD. The food domain with its different ramifications is not only recruited to conceptualize actions of disdain from the beloved but also other mental actions representing socio-cultural values.

- **Greed/satisfaction:** Some proverbs describe experiences of hunger and satiation. These two physiological experiences are mapped respectively onto the mental experiences of greed and satisfaction. In fact immoderate consumption of food serves to conceptualize people’s incessant desire for doing certain actions [(*illi ma y-išba3-š min l-qas3a ma y-išba3-š min lHiis-ha* ‘The one who is not satiated from the dish, can never be satiated from its licking’)]. This proverb maps physical hunger which cannot be satisfied onto uncontrolled desire activating the metaphor DESIRE IS HUNGER. This desire has different degrees. A greedy person is not satiated from a dish. Life turns into food to a greedier person who is never satisfied from it [(*id-dinya ma yi-šba3 min-ha Had* ‘No one is ever full with life’)]. The greediest person is someone who is about to eat the whole life and the afterlife [(*baaš y-akil id-dinya w y-tsaHar bil-aaxra* ‘he will eat life and the afterlife’)]. All these proverbs can be seen as instantiations of the conceptual metaphor SOCIAL GREED IS PHYSICAL HUNGER. This uncontrolled desire is, however, negatively viewed in proverbs and greed goes hand in hand with one’s annihilation. A greedy person may end up in poverty [(*insa iT-Tma3 yansa-k faqr id-dinya* ‘Forget about greed and you will not be poor’)], or in death [(*iT-Tma3 w qat3aan ir-raqba mitHaDhii-n* ‘Greed goes hand in hand with death’)].

Greed is negatively perceived in TA proverbs while they value economy and satisfaction. These values are captured through experiences of food consumption. Hunger is positively viewed when it is preferred to asking for food [(*uq3id jii3aan w ma t-middiṣ yiddi-k l-mannaan* ‘Stay hungry and never ask for food’)]. Not only satisfaction is positively viewed but it is also associated with safety. Controlling one’s desire for food [(*illi xalla 3ṣaa-h li-Rḏaa-h ma šamt-it fi-h a3daa-h* ‘The one who saves his dinner for lunch will never be rejoiced at by his enemies’)], consuming food only when it is necessary [(*juu3 takil b-l-3sal* ‘Be hungry and you will eat with honey’)] and being satisfied with one’s food [(*bayDit il-yuum xiir min djajit Rodwa* ‘Today’s egg is better than tomorrow’s hen’)] guarantee preserving one’s dignity and peaceful life. Being happy with one’s situation is framed in terms of being happy with one’s own food [(*š3iir-na w la qamH Riir-na* ‘Our barley is better than the people’s wheat’)]. Hunger and satiation serve to conceptualize respectively desire and satisfaction in TA proverbs. While greed is associated with loss, satisfaction ensures safety and peace. People who experienced hunger after satiation are the example to follow [(*xuḏ-ha min yidd šaba3aan iḏa jaa3 w ma taaxiḏhaaš min yidd jii3aa iḏa šbaa33* ‘Take it from the hand of a satisfied person if he gets hungry and don’t take it from the hand of a hungry person if he gets satisfied’)]. Hunger and satisfaction are crucial in the eating process. While hunger acts as a drive for the eating experience, satisfaction puts an end to the experience. People experience daily these two physiological experiences; that is why they constitute well-known, familiar experiences serving to conceptualize different values. Consequently, these two experiences are almost thoroughly exploited in proverbs.

- **Patience / Reward:** Some food proverbs structure knowledge about food to describe the nature of the experience of patience. This experience involves surviving difficult situations and overcoming hardships without giving up one’s objectives. The physical experience of eating a bitter food is mapped onto the psychological experience of suffering difficult situations associated with patience. Patience is framed in terms of food experiences. Apart from taste, patience is viewed as one type of food in its first stage of preparation. Like bread, it is kneaded by the person who tastes it [(*3ajjaan iS-Sabr y-ḏuq-u* ‘the kneader of patience tastes it’)]. Similarly the reward of patience is highlighted in proverbs and captured in terms of food experience [(*iS-Sabr murr lēkin 3waqbuu Hluwa* ‘Patience is bitter, its fruit is sweet’)]. This proverb is motivated by the metaphor EMOTIONS ARE FOOD which incorporates SUFFERING IS BITTER and END OF SUFFERING IS SWEET. In many cases the reward corresponds to patience [(*ij-jmal Sbuurii ama 3allaaf* ‘the camel is patient but eats a lot’)] but sometimes the reward may not conform to patience. This situation is captured in terms of food experiences where the patient person corresponds to a long fasting person who breaks the fast with modest food. [(*Saam 3aam w ftarr 3la jraada* ‘he had fasted for one year before he broke the fast with a locust’)]. Conversely, impatience is negatively viewed in proverbs. It is captured in terms of food experience [(*l-Ralla ma t-Tiib- š b-l-mars* ‘You can’t force a fruit to ripen by beating it with a stick’)]. Patience may be a very difficult experience for a needy person. This feeling of eagerness to satisfy one’s need is captured in terms of food experience [(*ij-ji3aan ya-bta 3lii-h af-faar il-borma* ‘the hungry person feels heavy the time of preparing food’)]. The perception of time changes in such situations. Patience, however, should be moderate in order not to fall into hesitation which can lead to losing one’s interest [(*Hatt-ha ti-brid ja min lqif-ha sxuun-a* ‘he kept it to be cooled but someone else took it hot’)].

- **Value / Worthlessness:** TA proverbs frame the importance of a given object in terms of water. An important useful object must be preserved [(*l-biir illi tu-šrob minn-u ma t-armi-š fi-h Hajra* ‘Do not spit into the well: you may have to drink out of it’)], or put in the appropriate place to benefit from it [(*l-ma illi maši l-s-sidra iz-ziiituuna awla bi-h* ‘the water going to the lote-tree must go to the olive-tree’)]. In fact fruitless actions are framed in terms of fruitless action [(*y-Hlib fi Hallab manquub* ‘he milks in a punctured vessel’)]. A useful object is framed in terms of frequently consumed food [(*ki l-fuul-a win t-imši maakuu-la* ‘like the bean eaten wherever it goes’)]. The importance of a given object may be not valued at all, hence using it without acknowledging its importance [(*Kiif il-Huut mittaakil maDhmuum* ‘like fish eaten but often disapproved’)]. Additionally, the use of a valuable object may not correspond to its real value [(*rxoss l-Hriir Hatta t-Hakki-t biih iT-Tnaajir* ‘the silk is so devalued that it is used to wipe casseroles’)]. Proverbs describe worthless objects in terms of food with low nutritional value [(*k3ak ma y-Tayir juu3* ‘A cake that does not satisfy hunger’)], animals that are neither edible nor exploited by human beings [(*kif il-xanfuus la y-taakil la y-til3ab bi-h* ‘Like the beetle neither eaten nor played with’)] and food containers [(*ki z-ziir l-mtikki la y-DaHHak la y-bakki* ‘Like the inclined jar causing neither fun nor sadness’)]. Not only can an object be worthless but also harmful to other useful objects [(*ki l-xarwa3 y-ošrob l-ma w y-Dayiiq 3aš-šjar* ‘like the Palma Christi, drinking water and plaguing the trees’)]. In fact usefulness is associated with edibility. Frequently consumed food corresponds to frequently useful objects, less useful objects are captured in terms of food with low nutritional value and worthless objects correspond to inedible food. This is captured in the two conceptual metaphors USEFULNESS IS EDIBILITY and WORTHLESSNESS IS INEDIBILITY.

- **Open-handedness / Economy:** Open-handedness is associated with consuming food in huge quantity. Economy is associated with preserving food or consuming a small quantity. In fact economy is associated with wisdom and open-handedness is associated with foolishness [(*iDhaa il-mahbuul y-akil wiiba il-HaaDhiq ma y-a3tiihaaluš* ‘If the fool eats a lot, the wise must not give him much food’)]. Wisdom is associated with consuming little food and preserving food. Such behaviour is the route to safety [(*illii y-akil qadd zbiiba ma yra mSiiba* ‘The one who eats as much as a raisin will never know a tragedy’)] and self-respect [(*illi xalla 3šaa-h l-Rdaa-h ma šimtit fi-h a3daa-h* ‘the one who keeps his dinner for lunch will never be rejoiced at by his enemies’)]. The concern should be rather on quality and not on quantity. The quality of an act should be given priority while the quantity should be seen as an afterthought. This is framed in terms of planting one type of vegetables [(*xaffif 3al-lift yi-RlaaD* ‘give enough space to the turnip and it will grow bigger’)]. A moderate behaviour in terms of doing different actions is positively viewed in TA proverbs. People’s actions should be measured [(*kil-qanfuud y-akil w yqiis* ‘like the hedgehog eating by measure’)]. Open-handedness should not be seen like generosity. The latter is positively viewed in TA proverbs. Generosity is framed in terms of food experience. The generous person will never be subject to hunger [(*l-yidd l-kriima ma tmuut b-juu3* ‘the generous hand will never starve’)]. Hunger serves to conceptualize need. The hand metonymically corresponds to the generous person HAND FOR PERSON. This person will never be in need because of his generous behaviour.

- **Sacrifice/Selfishness:** Edibility is the main feature of the food frame involved in conceptualizing sacrifice and selfishness. Sacrifice is associated with bearing a difficult situation for the sake of someone else. Undergoing such a difficult situation is captured in terms of eating a tasteless food [(*3la xaatir iz-ziiit tit-akil l-fituura*

‘Because of oil we eat the olive pulp’)]. Sacrifice is captured in terms of turning into food to the enemy [(*alaa xater Hbibni yakilni aduya* ‘because of my beloved, my enemy eats me’)]. Since human beings have ever manipulated their food, being eaten means being manipulated, thus losing competition. The understanding of this proverb is motivated by the generic conceptual metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD. The substructure of the food domain involved in the understanding of this proverb is the act of eating. Decomposing this metaphor into EATING IS WINNING and BEING EATEN IS LOSING resolves the problem of accounting for the competitive aspect of the eating process in this proverb. A person can either be the food or the eater. Similarly selfishness is captured in terms of food experiences. Selfishness consists in realizing one’s interest even if it was at the expense of others. This interest is framed in terms of eating forbidden food. Eating other people’s food serves to conceptualize people’s selfish behaviour [(*yaa waakil zar3 in-naass HoTT zar3i-k 3la ith-thniya* ‘Hey, eater of people’s food, put yours on the road’)]. While sacrifice is conceptualized in terms of eating an unpleasant food, selfishness is framed in terms of eating other people’s food. This is captured in the generic metaphor EMOTIONS ARE FOOD with its two versions SACRIFICE IS EATING UNPLEASANT FOOD and SELFISHNESS IS EATING FORBIDDEN FOOD.

- **Dependence / Independence:** An independent person is someone who relies on his own capabilities to achieve his objectives. In fact relying on one’s capabilities is captured in eating one’s own food [(*IDha t-Hibb il-lHam idbaH jamli-k* ‘If you like meat, slaughter your camel’)]. Conversely, dependence consists in relying on other people’s capabilities. This is framed in terms of eating other people’s food [(*illii y-3ammal 3laa marqit jaar-uu y-baat b-laa 3šaa* ‘the one who relies on his neighbour’s food passes the night without dinner’)] or using other people’s organs to eat food [(*y-akil fi l-bSal b-fumm Riiruu.* ‘He eats onion with someone else’s mouth’)]. In this case food corresponds to the objective to be achieved. Dependence is negatively perceived in TA proverbs. That is why someone who relies on other people will never achieve his objectives [(*illii ma y-akil b-yiduu ma yi-šba33* ‘the one who does not eat with his own hand will never be satiated’)]. Satiation serves here to conceptualize achieving one’s objective and relying on one’s capabilities corresponds to using one’s organ (the hand here) to eat.

- **Sufferance / Unconsciousness:** The food domain serves to conceptualize sufferance and unconsciousness. While a suffering person turns into food for time [(*y-akil fi-h id-dahr w y-faDDal* ‘Time eats him and keeps some of him’)], unconsciousness is framed in terms of a human organ turning into food for the self and then being excreted [(*qalb-u klaa-h w xraa-h* ‘He ate his heart and excreted it’)]. In this proverb an interaction between the metaphor EMOTIONS ARE FOOD and the metonymy ORGAN FOR FUNCTION. The heart being the container of feelings and emotions is no longer part of the body. The disappearance of the heart from the body corresponds to the absence of any feeling and so any consciousness.

- **Moderation / Exaggeration:** These two concepts are captured in terms of food consumption. TA proverbs highlight the importance of moderate behaviour in terms of food consumption. High consumption of food may be counter-effective[(*kaththar min l-3sal y-mSaaT* ‘Honey in excess is no longer sweet’)], hence the importance of moderate behaviour [(*iDhaa SaaHbi-k 3sal ma t-alsH-uuš il-koll* ‘If your friend is honey don’t lick him all’)].

- **Incompatibility / Harmony:** The route to express incompatibility is to describe food experiences contrasted with particular behaviour. In fact food consumption is conditioned by a situation of rest. Incompatibility arises when food is presented in a difficult situation [(*ma xaSS l-mašnuuq kaan maakilt l-Halwa* ‘The

hanged person lacks nothing except eating sweets’)]. Being hanged is a difficult situation that does not correlate with the moment of joy captured in terms of eating sweets. Incompatibility is a situation in which there is a discrepancy between the owner and his possession. The owner corresponds to the eater and the possession corresponds to the food [(*rabb-i y-a3T-i l-fuul l-illi ma 3anduuš zruus* ‘God gives beans to those who don’t have teeth’)]. Conversely, harmony is a situation in which the owner corresponds to his possession captured in terms of food experience where the eater corresponds to the food [(*fuulaa msaws-a w TaaH bi-ha Rraab a3warr* ‘a bean with a weevil found by a one-eyed crow’)].

- **Experience / Lack of experience:** Experience and lack of experience are two concepts structured in terms of food experience. An experienced person is someone who ate different types of food and even passed nights without food. [(*kli-na-h maalaH w massuus w bit-na il-lyaalii blaašii* ‘We ate it salted and tasteless and we passed nights without food’)]. Conversely, lack of experience is captured in terms of the inability to eat and even taste food [(*ha s-suuq ma 3andi fi-h ma n-δuuq* ‘I have nothing to taste in this market’)]. In these two proverbs life corresponds to food and human actions correspond to eating. This is captured in the two conceptual metaphors LIFE IS FOOD and EXPERIENCING IS EATING.

- **Loss / Deception:** Deception and loss are framed in terms of food experiences in TA proverbs. Deception is captured in terms of lost water. The experience of putting water in a sieve, which turns out to be fruitless since water cannot be put in a punctured container, serves to structure the deception of a person who relies on men [(*illi ya-mmin ir-rjaal k-illi ya-mmin il-maa fi l-Rorbaal* ‘The one who trusts men is like the one who believes that water can be put in a sieve’)]. Loss is similarly conceptualized in terms of wasted oil [(*iz-ziit iḏaa t-bazza33 qliil lamman-u* ‘Once poured, oil is difficult to be gathered’)]. Once poured, oil cannot be again put in a container. This experience serves to conceptualize any situation of loss where the damage is so big that things can never return as they were.

- **Kindness / Ingratitude:** Proverbs frame a kind person in terms of a sweet food. They also frame kind behaviour in terms of giving sweet food. Proverbs highlight that this kindness may be met by an ungrateful attitude [(*ana b-t-tamra l-fumm-u w huwa b-l-3uud l-3iin-i* ‘While I give him a date, he puts me a stick in the eye’)]. Feeding someone serves to conceptualize kind behaviour while hurting the feeder corresponds to ungrateful behaviour [(*jaa y-at3im fi-h fi l-3sal 3aDD-lu sob3-u* ‘He bites the finger that feeds him honey’)]. This is captured in the two metaphors KINDNESS IS FEEDING and INGRATITUDE IS HURTING THE FEEDER.

- **Reality / Appearance:** Whether by focusing on the shape of the food type [(*muš l-mdawwarr l-kullu k3ak* ‘Not all that is round is cake’)] or by comparing a human being to diverse food types [(*3aamil ruuhuu zbiib w huwa hsuu* ‘he thought of himself raisins however he is soup’)], the food domain serves to conceptualize distinct situations representing the difference between appearance and reality.

This section has shown that the food domain in TA serves to conceptualize multiple target domains. TA proverbs discuss numerous issues mainly associated with the human affairs. The food domain is exploited almost in all its patterns to frame human traits and many socio-cultural values metaphorically.

5 Discussion

This section will discuss the results of the qualitative analysis of TA food metaphors. The first subsection deals with the dominance of the food domain in the text of many TA proverbs. The second subsection highlights the embodied nature of the food experience and its importance in conceptualizing multiple abstract concepts.

5.1 Productivity of the food domain

This study was stimulated by the abundant presence of the food domain. This originates from the nature of this highly experienced familiar domain. It is involved in TA proverbs with all its patterns. Whether it is cultivating, preparing, cooking and especially desiring, tasting, being hungry and being satiated, the experiences associated with the food domain are systematically exploited in TA proverbs. These experiences were proven to have a pervasive non-literal presence.

The survey of TA proverbs showed that in almost one in six proverbs we find at least one food-related term. This abundance is significant with respect to the different domains discussed in TA proverbs. Proverbs deal generally with human affairs through describing familiar situations. Dealing with food is one of these concrete experiences abundantly present in TA proverbs. This clear presence of the food domain is accounted for by the nature of proverbial expressions. Because these expressions are mostly defined short expressions to describe familiar situations and since food is vital to human existence and people experience daily many of its patterns, such a highly experienced domain is more likely to be met in proverbs

5.2 Embodiment

Because proverbs describe mostly familiar well-known situations, people's experiences with food are likely to be met in proverbs. Moreover people's experiences with food are physiologically tainted. In fact, the food domain involves many embodied experiences. These experiences include hunger, putting food in the mouth, tasting, chewing, swallowing, choking, digesting and being satiated. These lived experiences in our bodies inspire and contain the way we conserve and articulate many of our other experiences (Emanation 1995:164). Our analysis of all these embodied experiences will follow the chronological order of the different experiences associated with the eating process.

The first drive for food is hunger. Proverbs exploit the physiological experience of hunger to capture the mental experience of desire. Hunger generally precedes the eating process. Similarly desire precedes different actions that satisfy this desire. To gain a further understanding of the relevance of this embodied experience in proverb understanding let us consider the following proverb:

- (2) *ij-jii3aan jii3aan wa law y-RaTs-u-h fi ziir dhaan*
 the hungry hungry and if they dump him in jar cooking butter
 ‘The hungry person will be hungry even if they dump him in a cooking
 butter jar.’

By applying this particular situation of hunger on a number of similar situations, physical hunger serves to conceptualize psychological hunger. This proverb describes hunger that can never be satiated even if given a huge quantity of food. This knowledge serves to conceptualize greed that can never be satisfied whatever the possession a person may have. This proverb may apply to a person who is obsessed with collecting money no matter how rich he is. The embodied experience of hunger serves to conceptualize this desire for collecting money where hunger corresponds to desire and food corresponds to money. Hunger is not, however, the only food experience serving to conceptualize less concrete experience. Eating and specifically entering food into the mouth is also exploited to conceptualize less concrete experiences.

The eating process starts with entering food into the mouth. This particular experience serves to conceptualize less concrete experiences.

- (3) *l-mra kif t-tamra imsaH-ha w kul-ha*
 the woman like the date wipe-IMP to her and eat-IMP to her
 ‘The woman is like a date, wipe her before eating her.’

The understanding of this proverb is governed by the metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD. In this proverb a woman is compared to a date to conceptualize the pleasure of sexual intercourse. This metaphor links the eating process to the sexual act. Wiping the date corresponds to the intimate closeness that precedes the sexual act and eating the date corresponds to the sexual act itself. This is essentially motivated by “the ‘schematic isomorphism’ between the act of eating and the sex act [and] the set of psychological correspondences between eating and sex” (Emanation 1995:177).

After entering food into the mouth, the experience of taste is made active. The food may have a delicious taste or a tasteless and disgusting taste. This experiential model serves to conceptualize people’s appreciation of other human beings. The feeling of pleasure associated with eating a sweet delicious food frames people’s love and appreciation of others.

- (4) a. *uxt-ii min umm-ii kil-3sal fi fumm-ii*
 sister my from mother my [be-IMP] like honey in mouth my
 ‘My sister is like the honey in my mouth.’

- b. *iD-Durra murr-a*
 the fellow wife bitter
 ‘The fellow wife is bitter.’

While sweetness serves to conceptualize cherished persons, bitterness frames repulsive persons. This is captured in the two conceptual metaphors LOVE IS SWEET FOOD and HATE IS BITTER FOOD. A sweet food is often very much liked. This appreciation is mapped onto feelings of fraternal love. Conversely, eating a bitter food represents an unpleasant experience. This experience is mapped onto the feeling of hate towards the fellow wife. The physical experience of tasting serves to

conceptualize mental experience of appreciation. The next step involved in the eating process, which is chewing food, serves to conceptualize other mental experiences.

Chewing food is a physical experience that serves to conceptualize abstract experiences. In fact different food types have different natures. Some food types are soft and easily eaten. They do not involve chewing. Conversely, other food types are hard and involve chewing for a long time before swallowing. These two distinct experiences serve to conceptualize the mental experiences of dealing with persons of different characteristics. Consider the following proverbs:

- (5) a. *lqaa-h* *3Siida* *l-lbal3aan*
 [he] find-PERF porridge for swallowing
 ‘He found him porridge to swallow.’
- b. *ir-raajil* *l-Horr* *fi* *l-arka* *morr*
 the man brave in the quarrel bitter
 ‘The bitter man is hardly beaten.’

Proverb (5a) frames a naïve person in terms of a soft, easily eaten food. This proverb is said about any person who is easily deceived by others. The experience of eating a soft sweet food does not involve chewing it. The ease associated with eating a soft food is mapped onto the ease involved in dealing with a naïve person. The naïve person corresponds to a soft food, discussing with him corresponds to chewing and persuading him corresponds to swallowing. Conversely, the TA expression *flaan 3Dam SHiiH* (X is a hard bone) conceptualizes a human being in terms of a hard bone. The bone is often cooked with meat but never eaten. It can be chewed inside the mouth but never swallowed. Neither chewing it nor swallowing it are easy experiences. These physiological experiences serve to conceptualize the difficult experience of competing with a vigilant person. Proverb (5b) captures a brave man in terms of a bitter food. The bitter food is difficult to be chewed and swallowed because of its unpleasant taste. This serves to conceptualize a courageous person that cannot be beaten easily. A food that is not well chewed cannot be easily swallowed thus resulting in choking.

Being choked is another physical experience that serves to conceptualize less concrete experiences. Consider the following proverb

- (6) *l-RaaSiS* *y-3ad-di* *b-l-xall*
 the choking person drink-IMPERF with vinegar
 ‘The choking person drinks vinegar.’

This proverb frames a very difficult situation in terms of choking and a less difficult situation in terms of drinking vinegar. The physiological experience of being choked serves to conceptualize psychological difficulties. Choking is a severe physical problem that calls for an urgent solution. Being limited by the time constraint, the choice of the solution will be limited too. Drinking water is the remedy for a choking person but if water is not provided any other liquid must do the job, regardless of its taste. The embodied experience of suffering a lack of oxygen is mapped onto any psychological problem involving lack of time. Drinking vinegar is mapped onto the first urgent solution to that problem. The solution involves a less harmful difficulty.

Digestion is another bodily experience serving to conceptualize the psychological experience of appreciation. Consider the following proverb:

- (7) *kol šay y-t3addaa illa iD-Diif ir-rkiik*
 all thing digest-IMPERF-PASS except the guest the dull
 ‘Everything can be digested except the heavy guest.’

The operation of digestion varies according to the type of food. Some foods are light and easily digested and others are heavy and hard to be digested. The experience of digesting food provides an experiential for qualifying people’s appreciation. Some food types can cause ill-digestion. This physiological experience is generally associated with a feeling of irritation. This feeling is mapped onto the feeling associated with the situation of having to deal with a dull person. The food corresponds to the guest, eating corresponds to hospitality and ill-digestion corresponds to lack of appreciation. This is captured in the two conceptual metaphors APPRECIATION IS DIGESTION and REJECTION IS ILL-DIGESTION.

Ill-digestion may end up in vomiting. This embodied experience serves to conceptualize less concrete experiences. Let us consider the following proverb

- (8) *3laa qad Hlawt-u 3la qad illi t-tqayyaa*
 With respect sweetness-its with respect that [you] vomit-IMPERF
mraart-u
 bitterness-its
 ‘The sweeter you eat the bitterer you vomit.’

This proverb correlates between two contrastive situations namely eating sweet food and vomiting. This proverb involves more than two contrastive actions. While eating involves entering food into the body, vomiting is extracting food out of the body through the mouth. The contrast is between eating sweet food and vomiting bitterly. The first physical experience is generally a pleasurable experience and serves to conceptualize mental pleasurable experiences. The second physical experience is a difficult experience that captures psychological difficulties. Let us imagine that this proverb is applied to a love relationship. Eating a sweet food corresponds to the love experience, enjoying the sweet food corresponds to the joy involved in the love experience, vomiting corresponds to the end of this experience and bitterness corresponds to the suffering caused by the separation. This proverb calls for moderation by joining two contrastive but correlating situations. Moderating one’s emotion is essential because happy moments can turn easily into their opposites. This controversy is conceptualized in terms of two embodied experiences common to all cultures.

The embodied experiences of food were not, however, void of cultural specificity. To gain a further understanding of the relevance of cultural embodiment in proverb understanding, consider the following proverbs:

- (9) a. *l-ma3da šab3aan-a w l-3in jii3aan-a*
 The stomach [be-IMPF] filled up and the eye be-IMPF hungry
 ‘filled up stomach, hungry eye.’

- b. *qalb-u klaa-h w xraa-h*
heart-his eat-PFCT it and excrete-PFCT it
'he ate his heart and excreted it.'
- c. *l-fumm ybuus w l-qalb b-issuus*
The mouth kiss-IMPF and the heart be-IMPF with-weevil
'The mouth kisses and the heart is with weevil.'
- d. *l-fumm tamra w l-qalb jamra*
the mouth a date and the heart fire.
'The mouth is a date and the heart is fire'.

Many proverbs describe body parts that are directly associated with the eating process. Greed in TA proverbs is associated with the stomach; an organ that is directly involved in the eating process. The conceptualization of greed is captured in the stomach eating and never being satisfied [(*l-karšš mađa klaa-t w ma qarri-tšii* 'The stomach usually eats and has never been satisfied'). Greed is also associated with an organ that is not normally associated with the eating process. Proverb (9a) is governed by the metonymy ORGAN FOR PERSON. The contrast between physiological satisfaction "the stomach being filled up" and psychological greed is captured through conceptualizing the eye being hungry. In fact the eye is mainly associated with psychological greed in TA proverbs [(*ma t-aakil kaan l-3iin* 'It is only the eye that eats')] which means that psychological greed exceeds physical greed which grant this faculty to the eye, [(*3iin iš-šiiix jaa-t fi š-šaHma* 'The eye of the old man comes into the flesh'), [(*l-3in l-waas3-a w iS-Sorra iD-Dayq-a* 'The eye is wide open and the fist is too small')] as well as TA expressions [(*3in-u waas3-a, 3in-u kbiira, 3inu maHluula* 'his eye is spacious/ big/ wide open, he is over-ambitious')] (Maalej Forthcoming). The eye offers different conceptualizations for greed and desire captured essentially as being big, wide and very often involved in the eating activity. The eye serves to conceptualize shyness in the proverb [(*aT3im l-fom t-stHaa l-3iin* 'Feed the mouth and the eye will be shy'). The eye acts in TA proverbs as a "bearer of mental faculty" (Maalej Forthcoming), which gives it a further faculty apart from perception. The conceptualization of these emotions does not "proceed from the physiological body directly to the mind, but it is mediated by the body as a cultural entity" (Maalej Forthcoming: 2). As shown by Maalej (Maalej 2004, Maalej Forthcoming) "cultural embodiment" occurs when the neural, physiological function of an organ underlies an alteration when it goes through the road of the culture.

While proverb (9b) frames unconsciousness in terms of food experience, proverbs (9b and 9c) describe a contrast between a physical state and its concurrent psychological state. The route to express the psychological states of unconsciousness and spite is to describe the physiological change that happens to body parts. The metaphor A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD may interact with the conventional conceptual metonymy ORGAN FOR PERSON to account for proverbs that frame some human organs in terms of food experiences. One of the organs involved in metaphorical conceptualizations of food is the heart, which activates the conceptual metonymy HEART FOR PERSON. In accordance with Maalej (Maalej Forthcoming) analysis of the metaphorical conceptualizations of the heart where the latter turns into an eater of the self to express conscientiousness *qalb-i kalaan-i* (My heart ate me) or the heart in a state of rest to express unconsciousness *qalb-i ma kalaan-i-š* (My heart did not eat me) (Maalej forthcoming:15), degrees of

unconsciousness go from the heart being cold as in *qalb-u baarid* (His heart is cold), to the heart being dead as in *qalb-u mayiit* (His heart is dead) (Maalej forthcoming) to reach the highest degree of unconsciousness with heart being food to the self. Proverb (9a) frames this high degree of unconsciousness in terms of the heart being eaten by the self and then excreted resulting in a final separation between the heart and the body. While consciousness is framed in terms of the heart eater to the self and unconsciousness is captured in terms of the heart being in a state of rest, a higher degree of unconsciousness is framed in this TA proverb in terms of the heart being a victim to the eater self. The mental experience of the conscience is framed in terms of an eating experience. The heart may be the eater or the food. Conscience is when the self eats the heart and unconsciousness holds on when the self eats the heart. This proverb describes unconsciousness in terms of a heart, perceived as the centre of consciousness, that no longer makes part of the body. This may be captured in the conceptual metaphor UNCONSCIOUSNESS WHEN THE SELF EATS THE SELF or UNCONSCIOUSNESS IS WHEN THE HEART BECOMES FOOD TO THE SELF.

The conceptualization of spite is captured in the heart being a fruit attacked by weevil in proverb (9c) or a fire in proverb (9d). These proverbs are governed by the metonymy HEART FOR PERSON. The following analysis is supposed to highlight the interaction between metaphor, metonymy and image schema. These three structuring principles interact to facilitate the understanding of many proverbial utterances. Their interaction is however another evidence in support of conceptual thinking as acting effectively in proverb understanding.

The heart in TA proverbs is not only conceptualized as the centre of emotions but as bearer of cultural conceptualizations of spite. This new meaning of embodiment embraces “not just the physiological body - or worse yet, just the physiological brain - but the body-in-space, the body as it interacts with the physical and social environment” (Rohrer 2007: 343).

The proverbs discussed above result in two main conclusions. First, the high productivity of the food domain seems to be traced back to its nature as an embodied domain involving different bodily experiences. One of the main characteristics of proverbs is their description of familiar highly experienced situations. Since people are mostly familiar with their bodies, embodied experiences are more likely to exhibit themselves abundantly in proverbs. Second, the food domain is almost fully exploited in proverbs. Being an embodied domain, this domain involves many bodily experiences. Whether it is being hungry, eating, tasting, chewing, swallowing, digesting, vomiting, digesting and excreting, all these bodily experiences are functional in proverbs. They served to conceptualize less concrete experiences by constituting the text of many proverbial expressions. Second, the cultural specificity of some food embodied experiences emphasizes the increasing relevance of this new meaning of embodiment in language understanding.

6 Conclusion

This paper has attempted to study food metaphors in TA proverbs. This study followed the eating experience in all its patterns and found that it is almost fully exploited by TA proverbs to conceptualize human beings, their lives and many socio-cultural values. The study concluded that the food is a productive domain in proverbs since it represents, along with the different elements involved within it, a

concrete source enabling the conceptualization of many abstract concepts. The study of TA proverbs has shown that the food experience is exploited in all its stages and served to constitute the text of many proverbs to be mapped on a number of other situations. Many studied proverbs stand as a proof of the variety and the richness of the food experience. This variety includes the food in its raw status, being half cooked or cooked. It also presents human experiences with food and developed them from being hungry and desiring to digesting and even excreting, through tasting, chewing, eating, swallowing, being choked etc. The food experience was also exploited while the food is being used, grown, cut, put in a container, spilled, cooked, and saved. TA proverbs follow the food in particular uses and different stages to make it serve as an experiential serving to understand abstract concepts. It is one of the most recurrent experiences in the human life and this explains its abundant presence in proverbs.

The correlation between the physiological and the psychological is crucial in defining the mappability of many embodied food experiences on human traits and also emotions. This echoes plainly in many of the studied proverbs. The experience of tasting a sweet and delicious food served to understand the appreciation of a kind, lovely person while the experience of tasting a bitter food framed the understanding of the relationship with a disliked, repulsive person. The feeling of hunger and satiation served to conceptualize desire and satisfaction. While the hunger for food is a concrete experience, other types of psychological hunger like the hunger for money or power are not easily captured only when compared to hunger for food. Difficulties associated with the eating experience are also exploited to serve psychological difficulties. TA proverbs exploit the state of choking, bad digestion and vomiting to conceptualize the sufferance of difficult situations.

In the light of the findings of this study, TA food proverbs can be roughly classified into three types: proverbs describing features of some food types, proverbs describing the eating experience in almost all its stages, and finally proverbs telling people's experiences with food including growing, cutting, saving, cooking, putting in a container etc. These three classes of proverbs have produced respectively three main conceptual metaphors: A HUMAN BEING IS FOOD, EMOTIONS ARE FOOD and LIFE IS FOOD. These three metaphors account for much of the understanding of food proverbs in TA. Along with GENERIC IS SPECIFIC, many conceptual metaphors seem to account for the understanding of proverbial expressions.

The study has shown the wide applicability of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC as a generic-level metaphor capable of accounting for the peculiarities of metaphorical dimension of proverbial expressions. This wide applicability must not hide the weaknesses of this theory taking from a single metaphor as the sole conceptual element accounting for food metaphors in TA proverbs. These proverbs were proven to be too varied to be easily subsumed under one single conceptual metaphor. The study points to some proverbial expressions that are best seen as metaphorical linguistic expressions by themselves. Moreover further investigations on a wider corpus may confirm a possible modification of the theory to include a bigger number of proverbs under its scope. In fact the frequency of the mapping provides part of the solution in the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC but paradoxically it represents a limitation with proverbs with a single mapping and where the source and the target domains are mentioned in the text of the proverb. This brings to light the extent to which the conceptual metaphor theory can be applied to account for this type of fixed expressions and whether a theory should be postulated to account for the language in general or can be specified to particular types of speech. Similarly, the question about the efficiency of thematic handling of proverbs

metaphorically seems to need further investigations. In this respect, proverbs exhibit panoply of themes like animals, farming, woman, etc. This calls for further investigations to confirm or reject the findings of this study.

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