



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

### Conceptual Metaphors of FEAR in Persian and English: A Cognitive and Corpus-based Approach

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This paper attempts to investigate and compare the conceptual metaphors of FEAR in Persian and English. FEAR is one of the basic emotions, conceptualization of which shows both similarities and variations in different languages. Investigating features of conceptualization is an essential part of the semantics of emotions. The cross-linguistic analysis of the concept of FEAR is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory put forward by Lakoff (1987) and the extensions of this theory provided by Kövecses (2002). We have attempted to compare and contrast FEAR metaphors and elaborate on some cultural and language-specific aspects in the two languages. We adopted a corpus-based method to gather the metaphorical expressions and then to extract the name of the mappings. We compared and contrasted these name of the mappings, and identified the commonalities and differences. Certain source domain concepts such as human, motion verbs, animals, and colors were explained in detail.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Semantics, Conceptual Metaphor, Emotions, Corpus Method, Fear.

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## Introduction

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was introduced by Lakoff (1993) and from that time until now, this framework in Cognitive Linguistics has attracted much attention. Accordingly, the generalization governing conceptual metaphors are not in language, but in thought; they are general mappings across conceptual domains (Lakoff, 1993:1). In fact, metaphor is not just a characteristic of figurative language, but it is human's mind and thought that have metaphorical essence.

Semantics of emotion is a rather new and interesting field in Cognitive Linguistics. In this field of study, a dynamic relation between language, cognitive science, and emotion is investigated. Emotions are cultural artifacts, embodying shared understandings of human nature and social interaction (Geertz 1975, 81).

Much has been done regarding the relationship between language and everyday communication in the frame work of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

Until quite recently, metaphor research in Cognitive Linguistics (e.g. Kövecses 1991, Lakoff and Johnson 1980) relied solely on intuitively generated linguistic data for analysis (Evans and Green 2006). Amongst the most recent body of research emerging from metaphor and metonymy researches, there is a recognition that much of the theoretical content of past work has lacked empirical evidence. An increasing number of studies in various branches of Linguistics employ a corpus-based approach (Allan 2008). In Steen's volume on metaphor in literature, he comments that although philosophical and theoretical speculation have been rife across centuries, attributing a crucial function to metaphor for the way we make sense of all sorts of phenomena, such ideas have only recently been put to test in empirical research on the actual usage of metaphor by people (Allan 2008).

Reviewing the cross-cultural studies of emotion metaphors shows that researches on Persian language emotion metaphors are missing. So the present study has tried to investigate one of the basic emotion conceptual metaphors (FEAR) through a cognitive and corpus-based approach, and then to identify similarities and differences between Persian and English FEAR metaphors.

Research questions are as follows:

- What are the common FEAR conceptual metaphors in Persian and English?
- What are the common FEAR source domains in Persian and English?
- What motion verbs are used in these languages to conceptualize Fear?
- How does FEAR personified by Persian and English speakers?
- Which animals and colors are used as source domains for conceptualizing FEAR?

## Review Literature

Following the Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff (1987), various researches have been done on the conceptualization of emotions in CMT framework. Cognitive linguists have compared emotion conceptual metaphors in different languages with a cultural viewpoint namely Apresjan (1997), Matsuki (1995), Yu (1995), Türker (2013), Tissari (2008), Soriono (2003), Retova (2008), Gulz (1992), Chen (2010), Esonava (2011), and Ansah (2010).

Compared to other emotion concepts (e.g., ANGER), FEAR has been a less studied emotion concept from a cognitive semantic perspective both in English and other languages (Kövecses 2000, 21). While Kövecses (1991) was the most comprehensive description of the conceptual metaphors of FEAR in English, Sirvydė's (2006) corpus-based study compared how the cultural patterns of thought and world views shape the conceptual metaphors of FEAR in English and Lithuanian.

Ansah (2014) has investigated the role of culture in metaphorical/metonymic conceptualization of FEAR in Akan and English. Maalej (2007) has focused on the embodiment basis of FEAR expressions in Tunisian Arabic. Oster (2012) has studied ANGST and FEAR in contrast through a corpus-based analysis of emotion concepts, Lin-ying (2012). Weiguan and Jinglin (2008) have had a comparative study of English and Chinese FEAR metaphors.

In Persian language, we find numerous papers and theses on emotion conceptual metaphors. PLDB<sup>1</sup> in IHCS<sup>2</sup> made corpus-based researches on emotion metaphors in Persian possible. These researches include Karimi (2012), Zoorvarz, Afrashi and Assi (2013), Tabari and Afrashi (2016), Afrashi and Moghimizadeh (2015), Afrashi, Assi, and Joulayi (2016), Ghouchani, Afrashi, and Assi (2016), Dehdashti (2017), and Javid (2017). Other researches performed on conceptual metaphors of emotions based on other corpora are Sorahi (2012), Rouhi (2008), Moloudi and Karimi Doostan (2017), Malekian (2012), Sharafzadeh and zare (2014), Pirzad, Pazhakh and Hayati (2012).

### **Method**

In this research, Persian metaphorical expressions have been taken from PLDP which has more than 500 books and articles including 60 million words. The texts contain a wide range of fiction, nonfiction, play, scenario, newspapers, etc. These texts are written with various styles like written form, spoken form, literary form, and colloquial form of Standard Persian.

First of all, key words in the lexical field of FEAR were selected and searched in the corpus. Then the relevant metaphorical expressions of FEAR were gathered from a hand-made corpus of 42 current Persian written texts which are similar to everyday speech. As a consequence, 600 metaphorical expressions were found. Finally, these expressions were analyzed one by one to extract the name of the mappings and the related source domain concepts.

### **Common FEAR Metaphors in Persian and English**

In this part, we compare FEAR conceptual metaphors in Persian and English. To do so, first common names of the mappings are presented in table 1, and then examples from both languages are given.

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<sup>1</sup> Persian Language Data Base

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Table 1: Common Names of Mappings of FEAR in Persian and English

Common Names of Mappings of FEAR in English and Persian
FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE
FEAR IS AN ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR
FEAR IS INSANITY
FEAR IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER
FEAR IS A CONTAINER
FEAR IS A SEED
FEAR IS COLD
FEAR IS A FLUIDE IN A CONTAINER
FEAR IS A VISIOUS ENEMY
FEAR IS A TORMENTOR
FEAR IS ILLNESS
FEAR IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING
FEAR IS AN OPPONENT
FEAR IS A BURDEN

Based on the above information, common source domains of FEAR in Persian and English are as follows:

Table 2: Common Source Domains in Persian and English

Common FEAR Source Domains in Persian and English	
FORCE	HUMAN
CONTAINER	ILLNESS
PLANT	WAR
COLD	SUBSTANCE
BEING	ANIMAL
FLUID	

FEAR IS A FLUIDE IN A CONTAINER

a. Eng. Ex.: He was full of fear.<sup>1</sup>

b. Per. Ex.: engar færsem rixte æst. (It seems as if I don't have fear anymore.)

Literary translation: It seems my fear has overflown.

FEAR IS A TORMENTOR

a. Eng. Ex.: Her parents were tormented by the fear that she might drawn.

b. Per. Ex.: amædæne mehdi u: ra æz jecændzeye tænhayi: væ færs nedzæt mi:d:d. (Mehdi's arrival released him from loneliness and fear of torture.)

<sup>1</sup> English examples are from Esenova (2006).

FEAR IS AN OPPONENT

- a. Eng. Ex.: He was wrestling with his fear.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $\chi\alpha:\nu u:m$   $t\ae v\alpha nest$   $c\ae mi$   $b\ae r$   $t\ae rse$   $\chi\odot d$   $G\ae l\ae be$   $kon\ae d$ . (She could overcome her fear a little.)

FEAR IS A BURDEN

- a. Eng. Ex.: He was relieved when the danger was over.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $v\ae h\text{f}\ae t$   $\ae z$   $reza\text{f}\alpha$   $ru:ye$   $t\ae mame$   $\chi\alpha nevade$   $s\ae f\text{j}ini$   $mic\ae rd$ . (The fear from Rezashah was a burden for the family.)

FEAR IS A NATURAL FORCE

- a. Eng. Ex.: She was engulfed with panic.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $v\ae h\text{f}\ae ti:$   $na:g\ae hani$   $\ae ha:liye$   $cerman$   $ra$   $f\ae ra$   $jereft$ . (An unexpected terror ceased people in the city.)

FEAR IS A SUPERIOR

- a. Eng. Ex.: Fear dominated his actions.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $h\ae ras$   $b\ae r$   $h\ae me$   $t\text{f}i:z$   $t\ae s\ae llot$   $daft$ . (Panic has dominated everything.)

FEAR IS INSANITY

- a. Eng. Ex.: He was insane with fear.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $\ae z$   $t\ae rs$   $di:vane$   $be$   $n\ae z\ae r$   $miresi:d$ . (He looked mad because of fear.)

FEAR IS A CONTAINER

- a. Eng. Ex.: They turned the lights out and sat in fear.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $z\ae n$   $mi\text{gof}t$   $p\ae s$   $p\alpha\text{f}\odot$   $\ae z$   $t\ae rs$   $biyare\text{f}$   $bi:ru:n$ . (The woman said: "common on and release him from fear.")  
Lit. Trans.: The woman said: "common on and bring him out of fear."

FEAR IS SEED/PLANT

- a. Eng. Ex.: A sour thick fear eddied in his throat.
- b. Per. Ex.:  $melse$   $bi:d$   $mil\ae rzid$ . (He was shaking as a willow.)

As it is presented in table 1, Persian and English have 15 common names of the mappings for FEAR conceptualization. In spite of these commonalities, some conceptual and cultural differences were found:

FEAR IS A VISIOUS ENEMY

In both languages, FEAR is considered as an enemy, but in Persian, FEAR is an obvious enemy whom you should fight with while in English, FEAR is a hidden enemy which gradually penetrates in to the person and he out bushes for his prey.

- a. Eng. Ex.: She managed to harness her fear.

b. Per. Ex.: *ba læfjære tærs peyvæste dær seti:zænd.* (They are in a battle with FEAR army all the time.)

#### FEAR IS AN ILLNESS

It is worth mentioning that FEAR experience in Persian is linked to “gall”. According to the Iranian cultural patterns and traditional medicine, gall and its location in the body (liver) are considered as the symbols of courage. It’s blowing up or fading away is a dangerous illness and symbolically shows timidity; therefore, gall is considered as the container of courage. This situation has shaped GALL IS THE CONTAINER OF COURAGE metaphor in Persian, but in English, guts plays this role.

a. Eng. Ex.: It takes guts to start a new business on your own.

b. Per. Ex.: *nemidanæd æz kodam tæræf berævæd biftar æz tærs daræd zæhreæf a:b mi:fævæd.* (He doesn’t know his way, his gall fades away.)

#### FEAR IS A SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER

In spite of the fact that this metaphor is common in both languages, the related linguistic expressions show differences in Persian and English.

In English, head and heart are considered as the containers of emotions while in Persian, heart plays this role. According to Sharifian & et al. (2008), HEART as the container of emotions could be empty (experiencing fear) or full (experiencing sadness), it may have depth (having deep feelings), or it may have beginning, it may be expanded or it can be fragile. Such container would be brimful (or overflowed).

a. Eng. Ex.: Her head was full of fear.

b. Per. Ex.: *šahzade bi eχtiyar ezterab væ væhšæti dær dele χod ehsas micærd.* (The prince was feeling anxiety and horror in his heart.)

#### FEAR IS COLD

In English, the expressions related to this metaphor have wider varieties than Persian; the wide range of vocabulary representing coldness as a result of feeling FEAR in English is probably one reason. However, in Persian freezing or cold sweat shows fear while in English, besides these two expressions, other words like chill, shiver, tremble, etc. are signs of fear with different intensities. But both languages use the verb “freeze” to show feeling cold as a result of FEAR. Considering our Persian corpus data, ‘freezing’ covers the entire body in Persian, but in English, it is related to blood.

a. Eng. Ex.: The Russian tanks sent a chill through the population.

b. Per. Ex.: *tæne gil:itʃ yæχ mizænæd væ læbhayæf be læræzæ mioftæd.* (His body was frozen and his lips were going to jerk.)

c. *pahayæm hesabi yæχ cærde bu:d væ ehsase tærs be arami dær mæn nufu:z micærd.* (My feet were completely frozen and fear gradually penetrated inside me.)

**Motion Verbs as Source Domain of FEAR Metaphors in Persian and English**

One of the sub-categories of motion verbs are Metaphorical motion verbs which were introduced by Talmy (2000). Motion verbs as source domain of metaphors help us express and describe emotions realistically. Employing motion verbs, we can describe or picture abstract entities easily, i.e., emotions are conceptualized through embodiment. Thus the expressions of emotions appears no more as metaphors or other types of figurative language (Sandström 2006, 37).

In this part, we compare Persian and English motion verbs as source domain of FEAR metaphors.

Per. Ex.: be diyare bar'vi: ſeta:ft. 'lit<sup>1</sup> to be diē or piſ ræftæn (lit: to get success)

Table 3: Motion Verbs as Source Domains of FEAR Metaphors in Persian

Motion Verbs in Persian	
Shake	Jump
Escape	Crawl
Come	Pull
Go	Go up

Table 4: Motion Verbs as Source Domains of FEAR Metaphors in English

Motion Verbs in English	
Shake	Crawl
Run	Tip-toe
Leap	Walk on eggshell
Stagger	

Certain motion verbs employed in conceptualizing FEAR in English are known as Self-motion frame according to Fillmore Semantic Frame Theory (2005); at these verbs, the Self-mover, a living being moves under its own power in a directed fashion, i.e. along what could be described as a Path, with no separate vehicle (Sandström 2006, 17). In Persian, the verb shake /tekān χərdæn/ has high frequency in the corpus. According to Talmy (2000) this type of motion is known as self-contained motion.

Based on our corpus data, crawl and shake, were two common motion verbs used as the source domain of FEAR metaphors in Persian and English.

**FEAR Personification in Persian and English**

Studying the findings of Servide (2006) and the results of our data analysis, we tried to draw a picture of FEAR, as conceptualized in Persian language. According to Servide (2006), in English FEAR is personified in a way that it grows (the FEAR grows stronger), gets old (the old FEAR), and dies (people were immortal FEAR). Sometimes, it is a childish behavior (every neurotic case went back to the childish FEAR of the father). FEAR may have contradictory meanings for example, it is

defined blind (what blind FEAR in snow chaos), or it may have many eyes (FEAR has many eyes and can see things underground).

For more detailed explanation, the expression of dressed FEAR means that FEAR is assumed as wearing a straitjacket to imprison people. (I spent that night in a straitjacket of FEAR). Servide (2006) presumes that FEAR has legs, to walk; moreover, it explains FEAR is a being which is dark without mentioning any exact color.

Example: The headmaster at my junior school was a real ogre.



Fig. 1. FEAR Is a Being in English (Servide 2006)

In order to draw the picture of FEAR in Persian world view, we gathered metaphorical expressions which included personification of FEAR, with source domains such as human, animal, or a supernatural being. Then further details including the characteristics or behaviors of those three source domains were analyzed. To elaborate this, please consider the following examples:

a. Gilich was worry about FEAR reflection on Seyyed agha Moin's face. (FEAR has light.)

gilich binnace bazta:be tærs bæf tʃehreye aɣa mojn bu:d .

b. He saw a shadow of horror near himself and as the shadow came closer, he felt himself lonelier. (FEAR has a shadow which moves like a human being.)

sæyeye væhʃæt ræ dær cenare ɣod midid væ hærgædr i:n sæye be u: n æzdicitær miʃod ætrafe u: æz adæmiyan tohitær migæʃt.

c. Look! Now FEAR took his soul in its claws. (FEAR has claws like wild animals.)

tærs tʃedʒu:r ru:hæʃo tu tʃæʃ gereʃte.

d. They are in a battle with FEAR army all the time. (FEAR can fight.)

bæ læʃgære tærs peyvæste dær seti:zænd.

e. I ran and year was shoulder to shoulder with me. year can run.

dævi:dæm væ tærs ʃæne be ʃæneæm dævi:d .

f. FEAR covered the house. (FEAR is a cover.)

tærs manænde særpu:ʃi ɣane ræ furu migereʃt.





Fig. 2. FEAR Is a Being in Persian (Ghouchani 2017)

#### FEAR Metaphors and Colors

Sandford (2014) has employed two different usage-based methods to verify what color terms are associated with specific emotions, and finally she has concluded that emotions are conceptualized through metaphors and metonymies rooted in embodied physical and psychological experiences. Based on her research results, we have made a comparison between FEAR metaphors in Persian and English with color term source domains. In English, FEAR is conceptualized through colors like white, black, blue and green among which, white and black had high frequency in the corpus. Sandford (2014) also shows that 'yellow' and 'black' in questionnaire tests on FEAR expressions had higher frequency.

Our research results show that in Persian, 'white' and 'yellow' have higher frequency in the corpus. Seemingly the color 'white' has direct relation with body's physiological changes. In other words, the drop in the body temperature causes paleness while experiencing FEAR. The color 'yellow' is related to an illness in FEAR IS AN ILLNESS metaphor. Examples are as follow:

a. Eng. Ex.: When he got exhausted from parish work, and felt unwell, a FEAR would darken him.

b. Per.Ex.'tʃɛnan negahi bær u: miændazæm ke æz didænæm mesle bi: d belærzæd væ ræʃjæʃ tʃon zæferan ʃævæd.

(I will look at him so that he shakes like a willow and the color of his face changes to yellowish saffron.)

c. Per.Ex.'tæmame bædænæʃ be lærze oftad ke æz sefidi tæršnac ʃod e bu:d lærzi:d.

(His body was shaking and his face was white because of FEAR).

### **Animals as Conceptual Domains of FEAR Metaphors**

According to Kövecses (2005) animal metaphors are used ubiquitously across languages to refer to human behavior. Although connotations and labels may vary quite significantly, the general conceptual metaphor of HUMANS ARE ANIMALS exists across cultures, although animal metaphors are universal, they show cross-cultural differences.

Present research shows that certain animal names such as mouse, dog, goat, and beetle are used in FEAR metaphors while mouse has higher frequency in the corpus, it is worth mentioning that these four animals are known as symbols of FEAR in Persian culture. Wierzbicka (1985 and 1996) suggests that some themes are significant in peoples' conceptualizations of animals like habits, size, appearance, behavior, and their relation to people. Probably, all of these factors influence the role of animals in the symbolization of FEAR. For example:

ræzi dʒibbor mu:f mi:fævæd. (Razi pick-pocket is a mouse.)

In English the word "mouse" refers to a person who is silent and noiseless, and probably a little bit nervous, but not timid. Like:

He is a mouse. (As quiet as a mouse.)

As for goat, in Persian assumingly the vibration in its voice influences the role of this animal in FEAR conceptualization. For instance:

gahi hæm ke adæmhæ xeyli bozdel budænd. (Sometimes, people were very coward like goat.)

Dog's behavior towards human influences its conceptualization as shown in the following example:

hæmætu:n messe sæg æz hæmdige mitærsi:n. (All of you are afraid from each other just like a dog.)

The following example shows the role of beetle in FEAR conceptualization:

æz tærsø xedʒlæt su:sk fodo tʃæpid bir:xe otægo dærræ hæm be ru:ye xod æf bæst. (Because of FEAR and shame, he became beetle and ran to the room corner and...)

Esenova (2011) has allocated a part of his research to animal source domains in FEAR conceptualization. The following examples are taken from his research:

FEAR IS A HORSE

We all keep horses of FEAR in our subconscious stables. We feed them and shelter them and so of course, they breed.

As you see in the above example, the stable in the source domain is projected onto the mind in the target. The breeding of the mind correlates to giving rise to more fear and the feeding / sheltering of the animal corresponds to maintaining fear. Moreover this metaphor portrays fear as a horse kept under control.

**FEAR IS A SNAKE**

She saw FEAR slither across his face.

According to Esenova (2011), the SNAKE source domain is suitable for the conceptualization of FEAR not merely because of the fact that snakes are dangerous animals. One common folk belief about snakes in English is that they are cold-blooded beasts and since FEAR is typically associated with coldness (Kövecses 2005, 289), it is natural to think of FEAR in terms of a cold snake.

**A FEARFULL PERSON IS A WHITE-FEATHERED GAME BIRD**

He was one of the white-feathered sort.

In past times, white feather was traditionally a symbol associated with cowardice (Esenova 2011, 91).

The data related to the role of animals in FEAR metaphors confirms (Kövecses 2002, 125) the fact that people have a tendency to attribute human characteristics to animals and then again to reapply these features to humans.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, we performed a corpus-based study on the conceptual metaphors of FEAR in Persian and compared the findings with those in English.

Exploiting the Persian Linguistic Database, we attempted to identify and extract the relevant conceptual metaphors of FEAR from a corpus of 42 current Persian written texts which are more similar to everyday speech of people. Analyzing the corpus, the writers managed to extract 600 conceptual metaphors of FEAR in the form of 51 names of the mappings. Then the most frequent mappings and source domains in FEAR domain were determined, finally 27 source domains were identified and at last, it was found that the source domains such as substance, force, and movement are the most frequent source domains of the corpus by which FEAR domain is expressed.

This study covered various facets of FEAR metaphors namely the role of motion verbs, personification, colors, and animals in these metaphors.

The results of this research were compared with the findings of similar researches in English namely Kövecses (2000), Esenova (2011), Sirvydė (2006), Sandström (2006), and Sandford (2014). Actually, the main difference of this paper with previous researches in Persian is that here we have had a focus on cultural differences of FEAR metaphors in Persian and English while others had focus on FEAR metaphors just in the Persian language.

The present research confirmed this basic assumption of cognitive semantics that human reasoning is determined by our organic embodiment and by our individual and collective experiences (Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007, 5) and the fact highlighted by (Johnson 2005, 15); i.e., meaning, imagination, and reason are the marks of human intelligence which are emerged from our organic bodily interaction with our environment. Kövecses (2015) adds that culture has a filtering role in conceptualization in two ways: first, as our meaning making system functioning as context, and more specifically, as a factor present in metaphorical conceptualization in a given communication situation (Kövecses 2015, 72).

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پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی  
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## استعاره‌های مفهومی ترس در زبان فارسی و انگلیسی: رویکردی شناختی و بیکره‌ای

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این پژوهش سعی دارد به بررسی و مقایسه استعاره‌های مفهومی ترس در زبان‌های فارسی و انگلیسی بپردازد. ترس یکی از عواطف بنیادین است که مفهوم‌سازی آن در زبان‌های مختلف شباهت‌ها و تفاوت‌هایی را نشان می‌دهد. بررسی ویژگی‌های مفهوم‌سازی، بخشی ضروری از معناشناسی عواطف به شماره می‌رود. تحلیل بین فرهنگی مفهوم ترس بر اساس نظریه استعاره مفهومی صورت گرفته است که اولین بار توسط جرج لیکاف (۱۹۸۷) پایه‌ریزی شد و بعدها توسط کووچش (۲۰۰۲) بسط داده شد. ما تلاش نمودیم استعاره‌های مفهومی ترس را در دو زبان فارسی و انگلیسی با یکدیگر مقایسه نموده و برخی از جنبه‌های فرهنگی و زبان‌ویژه را در این دو زبان شرح دهیم. در این خصوص از روش بیکره‌ای به منظور جمع‌آوری عبارات استعاری استفاده شد و سپس نگاشت‌های مربوطه نیز استخراج گشت. در مرحله بعد این نگاشت‌ها در دو زبان با یکدیگر مقایسه شدند و نقاط اشتراک و اختلاف نیز مشخص شدند. در این رابطه بعضی از مفاهیم حوزه‌های مبدأ مانند انسان، افعال حرکتی، حیوان و رنگ با جزئیات شرح داده شد.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** معنی‌شناسی شناختی، استعاره مفهومی، عواطف، روش بیکره‌ای، ترس.

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