CHAPTER 4: Polysemy of body part terms

The study of body parts terminology is one of the most popular areas among linguists. Their enormous potentiality for semantic extension into other semantic domains, as well as their development into grammatical forms has attracted the attention of researchers from different domains (for instance Bilkova (2000), Chapell and McGregor (1996), Petruč (1986), Svorou (1993) etc.). The terms for body parts in Ladakhi are no exception. They offer a good, varied and rich laboratory for the study of polysemy and conceptualization.

Deignan and Potter (2004) used large computerized corpora of English (which contained 329 million words at the time of study) and Italian (from two corpora totaling around 35 million words) to combine the power of conceptual metaphor theory to explain the non-literal senses of lexis from the field of the human body. They found a number of equivalent expressions across the two languages.

Several important studies have suggested that the domain of body parts is central in metaphorizing bodily experience (for example, Goossens 1990 and Sweetser 1990).

In this chapter, the focus is on two body part terms in Ladakhi: go ‘head’ and kʰa ‘mouth’. These two body part terms, apart from being very common, show a great variety of meanings, which dictionaries usually list limited meanings.
as already mentioned in Chapter 3, section 3.1. The goal of the present chapter is to show how these semantic extensions are organized and structured by means of several cognitive mechanisms and the senses of go ‘head’ discussed below are systematically related and bound to the prototypical meaning of go as a body part. In another words, it discusses the polysemy of the body part terms go ‘head’ and kha ‘mouth’ in Ladakhi in terms of prototype, metonymy and metaphor that are central to cognitive linguistics and shows the possible semantic extensions.

4.1. go ‘head’

The diverse uses of go ‘head’ are grouped under four major categories: one signifies ‘prototypical’ meaning; the second designates metonymically extended senses, the third shows metaphorically extended senses in physical domain and the fourth one shows the metaphorically extended senses in conceptual domain. These four major categories are semantically related to each other by means of a metonymical and metaphorical shift from prototypical meaning to physical space and mental space. The following study on the polysemy of go implies that the senses of the word are related to one another more or less closely by various means, such as metonymy and metaphor.
4.1.1. Prototypical meaning of go

The word head described in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1996) as “The part of the body containing the eyes, nose, mouth and brain”. This definition corresponds to the prototypical understanding of the noun go ‘head’ as illustrated in example 1 below.

1. go ‘human head’ (LEUD: AH)

ηatsi atsi go tʃʰopojot

our brother-gen head big-v.be

‘Our brother’s head is big.’

The most central meaning or the prototype meaning of the noun go in Ladakhi is almost same as “head” in English. In this sense, the meaning in example 1 above refers to a human head. As introduced in Chapter 3, ‘prototype’ is the typical member of a category to which other members are related in a motivated way.

The following investigation on go illustrates that the existence and properties of polysemy follow directly from the characteristics of human cognition, that is, people tend to group things together by cognitive strategies such as metonymy and metaphor.
4.1.2. Metonymic transfer of go WHOLE FOR PART/PART FOR WHOLE

Metonymy is one of the basic characteristics of cognition. It is common for people to take one well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of something and use it to stand either for the thing as a whole or for some other aspect or part of it (Lakoff, 1987: 77). Consider the following examples:

1.1 ‘hair’ (Additional)

\[ \text{khos go braksuk} \]

he-erg head cut-pst

‘He has cut the hair.’

Sentence 1.1 is semantic extension of go via the metonymy WHOLE FOR PART relationship. In some cases, Ladakhi language allows the use of the word go ‘head’ to refer to the ‘hair’. The hair is part of the head. The metonymy at work is HEAD FOR HAIR. That is why the word go can be used in expressions like go brakt\[s\]as ‘to cut one’s hair’ (lit. to cut the head), go \[s\]ad\[s\]as ‘to comb one’s hair’ (lit. to comb the head). The head (the whole) stands for one of its parts: the hair. Here, head is metonymically mapped as the ‘hair’.

1.2 ‘height’ (Additional)

\[ \text{khiri t\[h\]ugu (r)gobonst\[s\]an so\[s\]uk} \]
your child head-height-having become-pst.perf

‘Your child has grown up (with) height.’

In example 1.2, the semantic extension of \( go \) is via the metonymy PART FOR WHOLE relationship. Ladakhi language allows the use of the noun \( go \) to refer to ‘height’ of the human body. The head is part of the body. The metonymy at work is HEAD FOR HEIGHT. The head (the part) stands for the height of the human body (the whole).

4.1.3. Metaphorical transfer of \( go \) (in physical domain)

So far, it is seen that metonymy can provide motivation for extension of a category. Another important kind of motivation comes from metaphoric mappings. Metaphor involves a transfer from one domain of conceptualization onto another. Consequently, there is one meaning involved that is called ‘prototypical’ and another one that is ‘transferred’ or metaphorical.

There are several ways in which senses develop from the prototypical meaning, but very often they develop through the processes of metaphor and metonymy.

The following senses in examples 1.3 to 1.8 are alike, because their objects are concrete and physical. All these senses are metaphorically transferred within the physical domain to refer to ‘top’, ‘highest point’, ‘end point’, ‘beginning point’, and ‘starting point’ of some concrete objects or locations.
These extensions are shifted from human head (animate) to refer to ‘top’ and ‘highest point’ of inanimate objects. Consider the following examples:

1.3 ‘top of hill’ (LEUD: AH)

\[ ri \, gona \, t\text{\textsuperscript{\text{h}}}u \, jo\text{\textdagger}d\text{\textdagger}uk \]

mountain head-abl water come-pr

‘Water flows from the mountain peak.’

1.4 ‘upper part of tree’ (Additional)

\[ lt\text{\textsuperscript{\text{a}}}\text{\textemdash}me \, go\text{\texte}ka \, it\text{\textsuperscript{\text{y}}}ud\text{\textsuperscript{\text{a}}}uk \]

tree-gen head-on bird-pr

‘There is a bird on the top of the tree.’

1.5 ‘top, highest, end part of (e.g. pen, needle, bottle etc.)’ (Additional)

\[ peni \, go \, t\text{\textsuperscript{\text{h}}}aks\text{\textsuperscript{\text{u}}}k \]

pen-gen head break-pst.perf

‘The front part of the pen has broken.’

1.6 ‘upper part of stair’ (Additional)

\[ k\text{\textsuperscript{\text{h}}}o \, \text{\textsuperscript{\text{\textasciitilde}}}s\text{\textdagger}k\text{\textdagger}e \, go\text{\texte}kana \, bute \, jo\text{\textdagger}s \]

he ladder-gen head-abl fall-pp come-pst

‘He felt down from the upper part of the ladder.’

1.7 ‘tip of tongue’ (Additional)

\[ t\text{\textsuperscript{\text{a}}}ts\text{\textsuperscript{\text{h}}}an \, t\text{\textsuperscript{\text{h}}}\text{\textsuperscript{\text{\textasciitilde}}}n\text{\textdagger}se \, lt\text{\texte} \, go \, t\text{\textsuperscript{\text{h}}}ik \]

tea-hot       drink-pp  tongue  head  burnt

‘Tip of the tongue is burnt by drinking hot tea.’

1.8 ‘nipple’ (LED: RN)

pipi  go  marpo  soŋsuk

breast  head  read  become-pst.perf

‘The nipple has become red.’

The senses in examples 1.3 to 1.8 above are metaphorically extended within the physical domain to refer to some concrete objects ‘mountain peak’, ‘upper part of tree’, ‘front part of pen’, ‘upper part of stair’, ‘tip of the tongue’, and ‘nipple’ respectively. These different senses are yielded by the occurrence of the nouns ri ‘mountain’, ltŋama ‘tree’, pen ‘pen’, șaska ‘stair’, ltʃe ‘tongue’, pipi ‘breast’.

1.9 ‘front side of shoe’ (Additional)

papui  go  tʃʰadtsuk

shoe-gen  head  tear-pst.perf

‘The front part of the shoe is torn.’

1.10 ‘head and tail/beginning and end’ (LEUD: AH)

goslakpo  godʒuk  loksuk

dress  head-tail  turn-pst.perf

‘The dress has become messy.’
1.11 ‘the highest part of sky’ (Additional)

namkʰ e gona nāmd u kʰ e ḍ u
day-gen head-abl plane  take-pr

‘The plane is flying from the highest point of sky.’

1.12 ‘topic or title’ (LEUD: AH)

debi gorgj an mardemoduk
book-gen head-title  very-good-pr

‘The title of the book is very good.’

In examples 1.9 to 1.12 above, the senses are metaphorically extended within the physical domain to refer to concrete objects ‘front side of shoe’, ‘head (oppose to tail), ‘highest part of the sky’, ‘title’ respectively. These different senses are yielded by the occurrence of the nouns papu ‘shoe’, goslak ‘dress’, namkʰ a ‘sky’, deb ‘book’.

1.13 ‘head-cloth’ (LEUD: AH)

goras koltʃ aspo ladakspi ʒ o l zanboʒik jinok
head-cloth  use ladakh-gen  tradition good-a  v.be

‘The use of head-cloth (during wedding ceremonies) is a good tradition of Ladakhis.’

1.14 ‘scarf’ (LED: RN)

ladaksla bomo tʃ aŋmas gotʰ ums  gonduk
ladakh-loc girl all-erg head-wrap wear-pr
‘All the girls in Ladakh wear scarf.’

In examples 1.13 and 1.14, the senses are metaphorically extended within the physical domain to refer to concrete objects ‘the cloth which is put on the bride’s head during wedding ceremonies (lit. head+cloth)’ and ‘the scarf that girls wrap around their heads (lit. head+wrap)’.

1.15 ‘beginning of text, line etc.’ (Additional)

ospelje gona sil

text-gen head-abl read

‘Read the text from the beginning.’

1.16 ‘starting point’ (Additional)

thumgona thu thadtsuk

water-head-abl water stop-pst.perf

‘The water has stopped from where it flows.’

The meanings in example 1.15 and 1.16 are metaphorically extended within the physical domain to refer to concrete locations ‘the beginning of the text’ and ‘the starting point of water, from where it flows’ respectively.

1.17 ‘the front of a line of people’ (Additional)

kho daal goeka duk

he queue head-in sit

‘He is sitting at first place in the queue.’
1.18 ‘to lead a dance’ (Additional)

kʰos rtsetšana go kʰjʊŋs

He-erg dance-while head bring-pst

‘He led the (group) while dancing.’

In examples 1.17 and 1.18, the meanings metaphorically extended within the physical domain to refer to concrete locations ‘the first place in the queue’ and ‘the first place of a group of people who are dancing’ respectively. These different senses are yielded by the occurrence of the nouns ķaš ‘queue’, rtseš ‘dance’.

4.1.4. Metaphorical transfer of go (in conceptual domain)

A conceptual metaphor is construed as a systematic correspondence or mapping between two distinct conceptual domains, one relatively concrete (the source domain), and one relatively abstract (the target domain). The more concrete source domain, closely related to bodily experience, is assumed to be a rich source of inferences that may be transferred to the relatively abstract and unstructured target domain, given certain constraints (Lakoff 1987).

In the following metaphorical extensions of the noun go, the senses are yielded via the insertion of certain verbs in the conceptual domain.

1.19 ‘start’ (LED: RN)

dzinđa go tsuktsʰar

class head insert-already
‘The class has already started.’

1.20 ‘be confused’ (LED: RN)

loks joŋtsana go(b) kʰörte lam nor

return come-while head turn(intr)-pp road confuse

‘(I) got confused the road while coming back.’

1.21 ‘to take advantage of somebody’s weakness’ (LED: RN)

spera maŋbo tanŋa goŋka dzakjan

talk lots of give-cond head-on climb-fut

‘If (you) talk too much, (they) will take advantage of (you).’

1.22 ‘be cheated’ (LEUD: AH)

kʰos ŋaa go(b) skors

he-erg I-dat head turn (tr)-pst

‘He cheated me.’

1.23 ‘feel dizzy’ (LEUD: AH)

ŋa basianŋ goŋŋ kʰor

I bus-loc head-come turned

‘I felt dizzy in bus.’

1.24 ‘be successful’ (LEUD: AH)

kʰo sile go thone jinok

he study-pp head complete v.be
‘He has completed (his) study and settled.’

In examples 1.19 to 1.24, the verbs тsдлк ‘insert’, кhор ‘turn (intr.)’, дзak ‘climb’, skоr ‘turn (tr.)’, кhор ‘turn (intr.)’ and тhон ‘complete’ are used with го respectively to refer to ‘start’, ‘be confused’, ‘take advantage of somebody’s weakness (lit. to climb on one’s head)’, ‘be cheated’, ‘feel dizzy’, ‘be successful’ in conceptual domain. The extended senses are yielded because of the verbs attached to the noun го. These senses are closely related to, but distinct from, the prototypical instance in terms of conceptual metaphor which cannot be physically seen.

The cognitive mechanisms such as metonymy and metaphor have identified the prototypical use of го as that of referring to a ‘human head’, and treated the other uses of this lexical item as motivated, non-prototypical senses, semantic extensions via metonymy and metaphor, related to the prototypical sense in a systematic way.

4.2. кhа ‘mouth’

The diverse uses of кhа ‘mouth’ are grouped under three major categories: one signifies ‘prototypical’ meaning; the second designates metaphorically extended senses in physical domain and the third shows metonymically extended sense in conceptual domain. These three major
categories are semantically related to each other by means of metaphorical and metonymical shift from prototypical meaning to physical space and mental space. The following study on the polysemy of kʰa implies that the senses of the word are related to one another more or less closely by means of metaphorical and metonymical extensions.

4.2.1. **Prototypical meaning of kʰa**

The word mouth described in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1996) as “The opening through which humans and animals take in food and/or the space behind this containing the teeth, tongue, etc.”. This definition corresponds to the prototypical understanding of the body part term kʰa ‘mouth’ as illustrated in example 2 below.

2. kʰa ‘mouth’ (LED: RN)

\[ tʃʰunəŋ kʰa ʃol \]

water-with mouth rinse

‘Rinse the mouth with water.’

The most central meaning of the noun kʰa in Ladakhi is almost same as “mouth” in English. In this sense, the meaning in example 2 above refers to a mouth of human being.
The following investigation on kʰa will illustrate that the existence and properties of polysemy follow directly from the characteristics of human cognition, that is, people tend to group things together by cognitive strategies.

4.2.2. Metaphorical transfer of kʰa (in physical domain)

An important kind of motivation for meaning extension comes from metaphoric mappings. Metaphor involves a transfer from one domain of conceptualization onto another. Consequently, there is one meaning involved that is called ‘prototypical’ and another one that is ‘transferred’ or metaphorical.

There are several ways in which senses develop from the prototypical meaning, but very often they develop through the process of metaphor.

The following senses in examples 2.1 to 2.3 are alike, because their objects are concrete and physical. All these senses are metaphorically transferred within the physical domain to refer to ‘mouth of a container’, ‘brim or the edge of the mouth of the container’, and ‘mouth of a bag’ of some concrete objects. These extensions are shifted from human mouth (animate) to refer to inanimate objects as shown above. Consider the following examples:

2.1 ‘opening, mouth of a container, spout’ (LED: RN)

zaṅs bru kʰa tʃuk

vessel-gen mouth close

‘Close the mouth of the vessel.’
2.2 ‘brim, the edge of the mouth of the container’ (LED: RN)

kore kh a kasuk
cup-gen mouth crack-pst.perf
‘The edge of the cup has cracked.’

2.3 ‘mouth of a bag’ (Additional)

khiri dzole kh a pesduk
you-gen bag-gen mouth open-pr
‘The mouth of your bag is open.’

The senses in examples 2.1 to 2.3 above are metaphorically extended within the physical domain to refer to some concrete objects ‘mouth of a container’, ‘brim or the edge of the mouth of the container’ and ‘mouth of a bag’ respectively. These different senses are yielded by the occurrence of the nouns zansbu ‘vessel’, kore ‘cup’ and dzola ‘bag’ in examples 2.1 to 2.3 respectively.

4.2.3. Metonymical transfer of kh a (in conceptual domain)

It has become popular in Cognitive Linguistics to use the cognitive strategy ‘metonymy’ to explain the links between polysemous meanings of a lexeme. According to Lokoff, Metonymy is “one of the basic characteristics of cognition. It is extremely common for people to take one well-understood or easy-
to-perceive aspect of something and use it to stand either for the thing as a whole or for some other aspect or part of it (Lakoff 1987: 77)”.

The “stand-for” relationship is simply the result of the domain-internal nature of metonymic mapping; that is, the false impression that metonymies obligatorily require a “stand-for” relationship derives from the fact that metonymies are constructed on the basis of a single conceptual domain, in such a way that one of the domains is already part of the other. Consider the following examples:

2.4 ‘verbal abuse’ (Additional)

\[ k^{h}os \quad n\aa \quad k^{h}arul \quad t\a\b \]

he-erg I-dat mouth-rotten give-pst

‘He abused me.’

In example 2.4 above, the word \( r\ul \) ‘rotten’ is used with \( k^{h}a \) to refer to ‘verbal abuse’ in conceptual domain. The extended sense is yielded because of the word \( r\ul \) attached to the noun \( k^{h}a \) ‘mouth’. Here ‘the mouth’ stands metonymically for ‘verbal-abuse’. This sense is closely related to, but distinct from, the prototypical instance in terms of conceptual metonymy which cannot be physically seen.
In this Chapter, I have analyzed the different meanings of body part terms \textit{go} ‘head’ and \textit{k\textsuperscript{h}a} ‘mouth’ in terms of prototype, metaphor and metonymy that are central to Cognitive Linguistics.

The cognitive mechanisms such as metonymy and metaphor have identified the prototypical uses of \textit{go} and \textit{k\textsuperscript{h}a} as that of referring to a ‘human head’ and ‘mouth’ respectively, and treated the other uses of these lexical items as motivated, non-prototypical senses, semantic extensions via metonymy and metaphor, related to the prototypical sense in a systematic way.

‘feel dizzy’, ‘head cloth’) with some illustrations. This is an up-to-date dictionary compiled in the light of current ideas on lexicographic practice and different speech varieties.

In addition to the senses identified by previous lexicographers, this study has succeeded in finding 10 more senses (‘hair’, ‘upper part of tree’, ‘top or end of any object (e.g. pen, needle, bottle etc.)’, ‘upper part of stair’, ‘tip of tongue’, ‘front side of shoe’, ‘the highest part of the sky’, ‘starting point’, ‘the front of a line of people’, ‘lead a dance’) of the body part term go ‘head’.

But the body part term kʰə ‘mouth’ in section 4.2. has got only one entry in the first two dictionaries i.e. Norberg-Hodge (1991) (‘mouth’) and Abdul Hamid (1998) (‘mouth’) with no citations. The Ladakhi-English dictionary (unpublished) by Rebecca Norman adds some more senses (‘mouth’, ‘opening, mouth of a container, spout’, ‘brim, the edge of the mouth of the container’). In addition to the senses identified by previous lexicographers, this study has succeeded in finding 2 more senses (‘mouth of a bag’ and ‘verbal abuse’) of the body part term kʰə ‘mouth’.