CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

This Chapter summarizes, discusses and concludes the present study.

7.1. Summary

The work described in this thesis has been primarily concerned with the analysis of polysemy in the semantic fields of body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs.

The data analysis presented in Chapter 4, 5 and 6 showed that these words convey a wide range of both physical and metaphorical meanings (also metonymical meanings in the case of Chapter 4) apart from the prototypical meanings. This thesis set out to explore how and why these polysemous structures happen between the domains of physical to different conceptual domains.

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).

This study is primarily within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics which proposes that the meanings are motivated and grounded more or less directly in experience, in our bodily, physical and social/cultural experiences, and
then elaborated by structures of imagination such as metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor and metonymy are considered as cognitive mechanisms which make it possible to link a physical domain to abstract meanings.

7.2. Discussion

Human categorization is one of the major issues in linguistics. The ability to categorize, i.e. to judge that a particular thing is or is not an instance of a particular category, is an essential part of cognition. Categorization is often automatic and unconscious, except in problematic cases. How human beings establish different categories of elements has been discussed ever since Aristotle.

Applying the notion of category and categorization to the study of words and their polysemous senses, words are considered as categories and their polysemous senses as members of such a category. The prototypical approach is adopted in the present research to explain the category of different word classes under investigation. In prototypical categorization, categories are also based to some extent on what Wittgenstein (1953) called ‘family resemblance’. The relations between members of a given category are like those in a family: a daughter might resemble her mother, and the mother her father, but this does not necessarily mean that grandchild and grandfather are alike. In terms of prototypical theory, this means that the central member and the less central ones are not necessarily linked directly; a less central member can be included in the
same category via its ‘resemblance’ with another less central member which does have a direct relation with the prototype.

In terms of prototypical theory, this means that the central member and the less central ones are not necessarily linked directly; a less central member can be included in the same category via its ‘resemblance’ with another less central member which does have a direct relation with the prototype. The prototype meaning is the most prominent and the most typical member of a category. In other words, in this model human categories have two types of members: the ‘prototype’ and several less central members related to the former in a motivated way. Thus, the prototype is the best, the most prominent and the most typical member of a category. It is the example that first comes to mind when one thinks of that category. Hence, category members do not have equivalent status; some are more important or central than others.

The present study shows the polysemy in the semantic fields of body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs in Ladakhi language in terms of prototypes, metonymy and metaphor that are central to cognitive linguistics. For instance, it identifies 24 different senses (including the senses listed in the dictionaries) of the body part term go ‘head’. It is argued that all these senses form a category whose central member is the prototypical meaning of go as a body part (see example 1 in Chapter 4). The links between polysemy senses are
defined in terms of conceptual connections (e.g. metonymy or metaphor). Metonymy and metaphor are defined as “mappings” or “projections” between conceptual domains. These cognitive devices can be distinguished because the connections made between things are different for each case (Lakoff and Turner 1989). In metonymy, the mapping takes place within the same domain whereas in metaphor, on the other hand, the mapping is across different experiential domains (Lakoff 1993).

The classical view on categorization that of Aristotle claims that categories are defined in terms of a conjunction of necessary and sufficient binary features: that linguistic analytical categories impose a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the membership in the category. This requirement not only implies that categories have clear boundaries and that all members of a category have equal status (Taylor 1995: 25), but also that there is an abstract, general definition with which all the members of that category must comply.

Under the classical approach to categorization, this would mean that all these polysemous senses are equally important members, none of the possible semantic extensions of a given word is more central than the rest. Hence, according to classical approach, all the 24 different senses of the body part term go ‘head’ have equal status in the category. The classical theory, therefore, has no adequate means of characterizing the situation where one or more senses are “central” or “most representative”, (Lakoff, 1987: 416).
The cognitive mechanisms such as metonymy and metaphor have identified the prototypical use of \( \text{go} \) 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.

7.3. Conclusion

This thesis discussed the polysemy of body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs in Ladakhi language in terms of prototype, metaphor and metonymy that are central to Cognitive Linguistics and showed the possible semantic extensions. In addition to the senses identified by previous lexicographers, this study has succeeded in finding more senses for all the words used for the analysis in Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

The present study would be immensely useful for the following:

1. Understanding the semantic phenomena of language

2. Dictionary making: This study will be useful for the lexicographers of Ladakhi language in terms of inclusion of all the different senses of each word. These different senses listed in the dictionaries would also be useful for the translators who translate literary works from Ladakhi into other languages or vice-versa.
3. Pedagogy: in order to teach a language in a proper way, meaning of words becomes the most crucial thing to deal with and in the situation of Ladakhi, it is necessary to teach the different senses of words.

4. The quality of existing dictionaries: this research work has found out the quality of all the existing dictionaries in Ladakhi and throw light on the improvement of coming dictionaries.

5. Process of meaning change and extension: meaning change and the extension of meaning, this is related with metaphor in Ladakhi.