Abstract

This thesis is a Cognitive Semantic account of polysemy in the semantic fields of body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs in Ladakhi language. It explores not only the different semantic extensions, but also shows as to why and how these polysemous senses happen in the language under investigation. It shows the mappings between the physical domain of body part terms, motion verbs and perception verbs onto more metaphorical or metonymical and abstract conceptual domains of experience. The different extensions of meaning in these semantic fields have not taken place as a result of chance, but are grounded in our own conceptualization of these sense modalities.

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.

Key words: cognitive linguistics, polysemy, prototype, metaphor, metonymy, body part terms, motion verbs, perception verbs, semantic extension.