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## A COGNITIVE STUDY OF DRINK EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH PROVERBS

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### ABSTRACT

Conceptual Metaphor Theory represents the output of a cognitive process by which readers can understand one domain in terms of another. This study aims to investigate the use of drink proverbs in English from a cognitive point of view and investigate the role of metaphor in communication as an unconscious process in everyday life. Also, it aims to identify metaphor as a systematic process that does not occur randomly. It is considered as a problematic task for learners to understand, interpret, and render the exact conceptual meaning of English proverbs. The procedures of this study are as follows: Presenting a theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics and adopting the model of the conceptual metaphor theory which is Lakoff and Johnson's "Metaphor We Live by" (2003) to analyze proverbs of drink in English. Another two models are used to support the first one which are Newman's (1997) "Eating and Drinking as a Source of Metaphor in

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**English”** and Quirk et al (1985) **“A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language”**. The study hypothesizes that the source and target domains in conceptual metaphors have a crucial role in understanding the meaning of drink proverbs in English. Concerning the levels of analysis, the present study deals with the semantic and grammatical levels. The data are collected from dictionaries that are associated with drink proverbs. Six samples are chosen for the analysis. In each sample, more than five items have been analyzed metaphorically and grammatically. The present study concluded that conceptual metaphors do not occur randomly and they are unconscious processes through conversations.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Linguistics, Metaphor, English proverb.

## دراسة معرفية لتعبيرات الشراب في الامثال الانجليزية

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## المستخلص

تمثل نظرية الاستعارة المفهومية ناتج العملية المعرفية التي يفهم بها القراء مجالاً واحداً من خلال الآخر . تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التحقق من دور الاستعارة في التواصل كعملية لا أراديه في الحياة اليومية من وجهة النظر المعرفية و تحديد الاستعارة بوصفها عملية منهجية لا تحدث بشكل عشوائي. تتمثل فرضيات الدراسة كما يلي: (1) مجالات المصدر والهدف في الاستعارة المفهومية لها دور مهم في فهم معاني الأمثال الإنجليزية. (2) قوة العلاقة بين عناصر الاستعارة المفهومية تعتمد على الفهم المجرد للمصطلح الملموس. تمثل اجراءات هذه الدراسة اطارا نظريا لنظريه الاستعارة المفهومية في الإنجليزية. تم استخدام نموذج لنظريه الاستعارة المفهومية "Metaphors We Live By" في لاكوف وجونسون (2003) من اجل تحليل الأمثلة التي تخص الشراب في الإنجليزية وتم استخدام نموذج اخر لدعم النموذج الاول وهو الكاتب نيومان "Eating and Drinking as a Source of Metaphor in English" (1997) للمعلومات الإضافية التي استخدمت لفهم استخدام الأمثلة في الحياة اليومية. بالإضافة لذلك تم استخدام نموذج اخر "A Comprehensive Grammar of

”**the English Language**” لتحليل النماذج تحليلًا نحويًا ويبين نوع التركيب النحوي والبنية النحوية لمجال المصدر والهدف على مستوى التحليل، تتعامل هذه الدراسة مع المستوى الدلالي و النحوي. حيث يعتبر المستوى الدلالي الأكثر اهمية لأنه يعتبر جوهره الموضوع . تم جمع البيانات من القواميس الانجليزية المرتبطة بالأمثال التي تخص الشراب. الاستنتاجات التي توصلت اليها هذه الدراسة هي الاستعارة المفهومية لا تحدث بشكل عشوائي ولها اساس في السياق وهي عمليه لا أراديه تحدث خلال المحادثة. وكذلك تبين ان الامثال تظهر بتراكيب نحويه مختلفة وبنية نحويه متنوعه.

الكلمات الدلالة: علم اللغة المعرفي، الاستعارة، الامثال الانجليزية.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Cognitive linguistics is primarily concerned with investigating the relationship between language, mind, and socio-physical experience (Evan, 2007: iv). Cognitive linguistic studies have proved that metaphor is an important aspect of human thought and plays an important role in the human conceptual system. Lakoff and Jonson challenged the deeply entrenched view of metaphor by claiming that it is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. This study investigates the conceptual metaphors of drink proverbs in English. Also, it stimulates the seemingly abundant presence of drink proverbs in English and understanding the metaphorical meaning. Mainly, it is focusing on mapping across conceptual domains as a distinct feature of the metaphor theory. As a result, there will be different types of metaphors and different ways of rending them in this culture. It holds several connotative meanings and conveying these meanings is not an easy task for speakers and writers of English Languages.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL METAPHORE THEORY**

Lakoff and Johnson (2003:16) state that metaphor is “pervasive in everyday life, not only in language but also in thought and action”. Our ordinary conceptual system, in which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The concepts that govern our thoughts are not just matters of intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. From the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain (A) in terms of another conceptual domain (B). The fact that conceptual domain (A) is conceptual domain (B) which is regarded as conceptual metaphor, in which the domain (B) from which we draw metaphorical expression to understand the conceptual domain (A) which is called the source domain, while the domain(B) is the understanding in the way that is called the target domain (Koveceses, 2004:4). Thus, the conceptual correspondence between the two domains is called mapping (Croft and Cruse, 2008:194). Mapping is corresponding between entities inhering in regions of the conceptual system. Mapping governs how parts of an attention pattern are mapped onto parts of the scene described by a linguistic utterance (Evans, 2007:130).

### **3. TYPES OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORES**

Conceptual Metaphors have unique types. Lakoff and Johnson (2003:24) explain these types as follows:

#### **i. Structural Metaphors**

Lakoff and Johnson (2003:14) refer to the structural metaphor as “cases where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another”. In this kind of metaphor; Kovecses (2002:3) claims that the source domain provides a relatively rich knowledge structure for the target concept. Knowles and Moon (2006:17) illustrate that the source domains in this type of metaphor supply a framework for target domains and this will determine the ways in which we think and talk about abstract entities and activities which the target domain refers. For example, the concept of **Time** is structured according to **Motion**, in the following example:

##### 1. “TIMES ARE MOTION”

One can understand the term TIME as the following element, physical objects, their locations, and their motion. Hence the following mapping will take place as follows:

- You are wasting my time.
- Times are things.
- The passing of time is motion.
- This gadget will save you hours.

#### **ii. Ontological Metaphors**

Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 25) state that “ontological metaphors arise when our experience of physical objects and substance provides a further basis of knowledge for understanding concrete ones”. Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances entities or substances of a uniform type. Ontological metaphors explain abstract notions such as time, ideas, inflation, and emotion in terms of objects and substances. The conceptual metaphor is illustrated in the following example:

##### 2. “INFLATION IS AN ENTITY”

- Inflation is lowering our standard of living.
- If there is much more inflation, we will never survive.
- We need to combat inflation.
- Inflation is hacking us into a corner.
- Our biggest enemy right now is inflation (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003:26).

### **iii. Orientational Metaphors**

Orientational metaphors do not structure one concept in terms of another, but instead organize as a whole system of concepts to another, and “spatial orientational” arises from the fact that we have bodies of the sort and they function as they do in our physical environment ( Li, 2010:14). Lakoff and Johnson (2003:26) state that the cognitive function of this type of metaphor is to make metaphorical expressions as a set of target concepts coherent in our conceptual system. Most orientational metaphors have some relationships with spatial orientation, such as up-down, in-out, front-back, off-on, deep-shallow, and etc. The following examples illustrate the orientational metaphor:

3. “HAPPY IS UP”

4. “SAD IS DOWN”

### **4. METHODES AND DATA COLLECTION**

The present study is concerned with drink proverbs in English. The data has been collected from English dictionaries that are associated with conceptual metaphors of drink. Therefore, conceptual metaphor is pervasive in everyday life not just in language but also in thoughts and actions. The data selections are concerned with drink proverbs in English in order to investigate the general meaning, metaphorical meaning, mapping, types of metaphor and the syntactic structure of proverbs. The analysis is confined to five categories with various models and the fourth categories are confined with the general meaning, metaphorical meaning, mapping and types of metaphor that found within Lakoff and Johnson's model **Metaphor We Live By** (2003) and another two models are used as support for the first one which is Newman's (1997) “**Eating and Drinking as a Source of Metaphor in English**” and Quirk et al (1985) “**A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language**”, to analysis the syntactic level.

### **5. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS S**

#### **1) Sample 1**

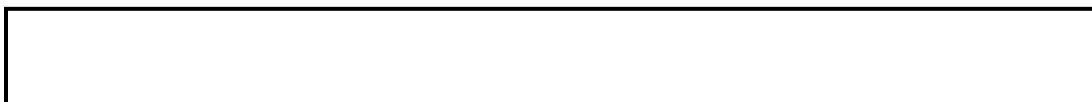
**Still waters run deep** (Speake, 2004: 291).

#### **i. General Meaning**

The general meaning of the proverb means the one who seems a placid exterior, but in fact s/he hides a passionate nature. Formerly, it also carried the warning that silent people are dangerous. According to the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Proverbs, the first mention of this proverb appears in classical times.

#### **ii. Metaphorical Meaning**

This proverb is used metaphorically as a warning. It is used to talk about a person who says little but might know a lot. Concerning the type of metaphor here is the ontological metaphor. It tackles words that indicate an experience of a person. However, the source domain is (water run deeps) meanwhile the target domain is (silent people). Hence, the conceptual mapping of this proverb is as follows:



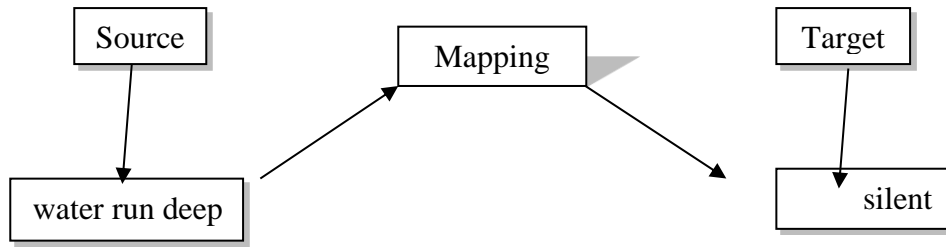


Figure (1): The Conceptual Mapping of Proverb 1 .

These two domains provide extra descriptions for understanding the use of proverbs in everyday life. The drink domain (i.e. the source) and its components are listed on the left, meanwhile the physical domain (i.e. the target) and its components are listed on the right. The following table clarifies this idea.

Table (1): The Drink Domain which Extended to the Physical Domain

Drink Domain	Physical Domain
Thirst	-----
Intake of drink	-----
Swallowing	-----
Digestion	-----
Nourishment	-----
Enjoyable gustation	-----

### iii. Syntactic Analysis

1-The syntactic structure of the proverb is a sentence.

2-The word class is indicated as follows:

Source	Target
Water	Silent people
Noun	verb+ adjective

**2) Sample 2**

**Duck Soup** (Speake, 2004:73).

**i.General Meaning**

This is one of the most common proverbs which is used in everyday and every situation in English. The general meaning of this proverb means something is very easy; an easy thing to do.

**ii.Metaphorical Meaning**

This proverb is used metaphorically to give optimistic for the reader that means doing something or accomplishing task easily. It is a structural metaphor, in which one concept is structured in terms of another. However, it consists of two domains: the source domain (soup) which is more concrete, and the target domain (easiness) which is more abstract. The conceptual mapping for this proverb is as follows:

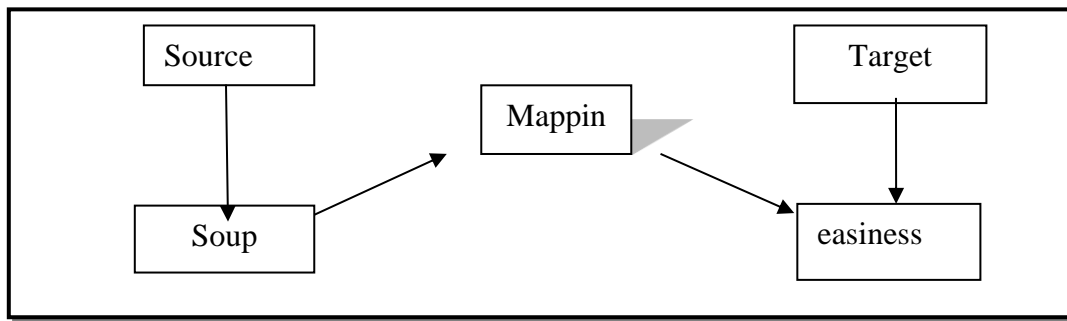


Figure (2): The Conceptual Mapping of Proverb 2.

These two domains provide extra information for understanding the use of this proverb completely. The source domain (the drink domain) and its components are listed on the left and the target domain (intellectual domain) and its components are listed on the right, see the following table.

Table (2): Drink Domain which Extended to the Intellectual Domain.

Drink domain	Intellectual domain
Thirst	doing something very easy like duck's soup
Intake of drink	getting something very easy the same as duck's soup Food is

	found in everywhere.
Swallowing	getting information easily as swallowing the duck soup
Digestion	-----
Nourishment	-----
Enjoyable gustation	enjoyable feeling in getting useful information easily

**iii.Syntactic Analysis**

- 1) The syntactic structure of the proverb is a phrase.
- 2) The word class is indicated as follows:

Source	Target
Soup	Easiness
Noun	Noun

**3) Sample 3**

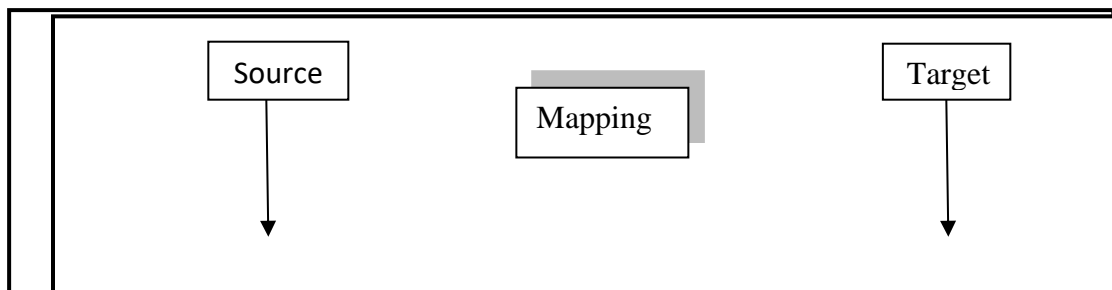
**Blood is thicker than water** (Speake, 2004:29).

**i.General Meaning**

The general meaning of this proverb means that someone’s loyalty to his/her family is greater than the loyalty to anyone else. In other words, the family loyalties are stronger than other relationships.

**ii. Metaphorical Meaning**

The verbal message in this proverb is taken and translated into an emotional thing within a person. This proverb is used metaphorically to indicate wisdom. The proverb emphasizes that family ties are always deeper and more important than other types of relations. It is a structural metaphor, in which one concept is structured in terms of another. It consists of two domains: the source domain is (blood is thicker than water) and the target domain is (the family ties). The conceptual mapping of this proverb is as follows:





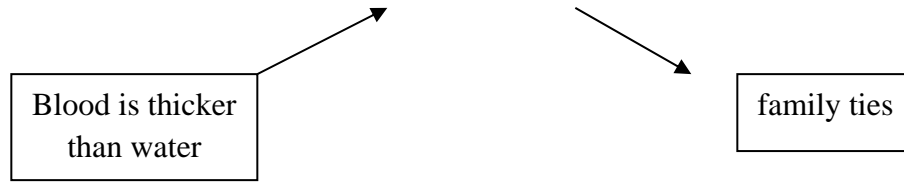


Figure (3): The Conceptual Mapping of Proverb 3.

These two domains provide extra information for understanding the use of this proverb completely. The source domain (the drink) and its components are listed on the left and the target domain (emotional domain) and its components are listed on the right, see the following table.

Table (3): Drink Domain which Extended to the Emotional Domain

Drink domain	Emotional domain
Thirst	-----
Intake of drink	-----
Swallowing	-----
Digestion	-----
Nourishment	the strong relationship between family
Enjoyable gustation	the enjoyable feeling is in the loyalty between families

### iii. Syntactic Analysis

- 1) The syntactic structure of the proverb is a sentence.
- 2) The word class is indicated as follows:

Source	Target
Blood is thicker than water	Family ties
Noun+ Verb+ adjective+ Noun	Noun+Verb

**4) Sample 4**

**It is good fishing in troubled water** (Berturm, 2004:180).

**i.General Meaning**

The general meaning of this proverb is that someone takes advantage of unfortunate circumstances, confusion, difficulties, and problems to benefit others.

**ii.Metaphorical Meaning**

The verbal message is in this proverb taken and translated into behavior within a person. It is used metaphorically as mocking from someone's behavior (irony). It is said about someone who is trying to win an advantage from a difficult situation or someone else's problems. It is an orientational metaphor. It consists of two main domains: the source domain (troubled waters) meanwhile the target domain is (personal benefit). Hence, the conceptual mapping of this proverb is as follows:

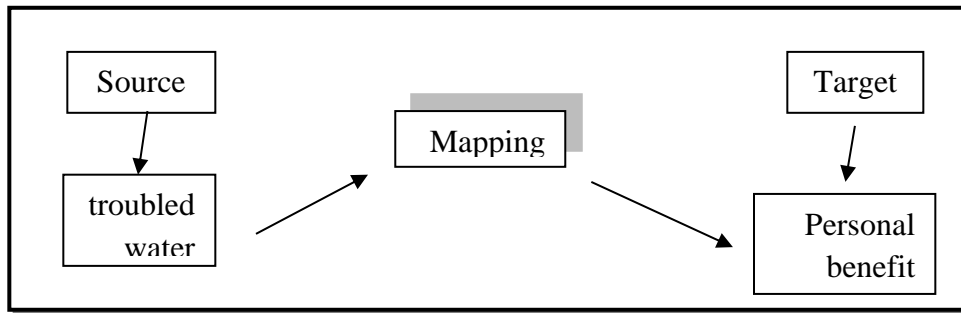


Figure (4): The Conceptual Mapping of Proverb 4

These two domains provide extra information for understanding the use of proverb completely. The source domain (the drink domain) and its components are listed on the left and the target domain (emotional) and its components are listed on the right, see the following table.

Table (4): Drink Domain which Extended to the Emotional Domain

Drink domain	Emotional domain
Thirst	-----
Intake of drink	-----
Swallowing	-----

Digestion	-----
Nourishment	the fishing in troubled water is winning in a difficult situations
Enjoyable gustation	Getting something new

**iii. Syntactic Analysis**

- 1) The syntactic structure of the proverb is a sentence.
- 2) The word class is indicated as follows:

Source	Target
Troubled water	Personal benefit
Adjective +Noun	Adjective +Noun

**5) Sample 5**

**It is no use crying over spilt milk** (Speake, 2004:63).

**i.General Meaning**

The general meaning of this proverb means don't spend your time worrying about something being done. You should not get upset or feel sorry about something that has happened and cannot change. You should keep moving forward instead of looking back at something bad that happened.

**ii.Metaphorical Meaning**

This proverb is used metaphorically as warning people not to worry or be upset about things that have happened. It is an orientational metaphor, because it consists of spatial orientation terms. It consists of two main domains: the source domain is (spilt milk) and the target domain is (misfortune; past). This action is untouchable. Hence, the conceptual of this proverb is as follows:

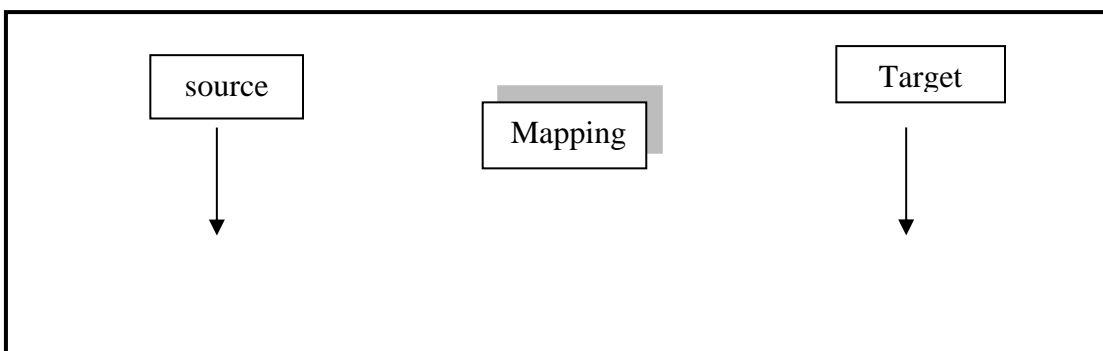




Figure (5): The Conceptual Mapping of Proverb 5.

These two domains provide extra information for understanding the use of this proverb in everyday life. The source (the drink domain) and its components are listed on the left while the target (life's experience domain) and its components are listed on the right, see the following table.

Table (5): Drink Domain which Extended to the Life's Experience Domain

Drink Domain	Life's Experience Domain
Thirst	-----
Intake of drink	-----
Swallowing	-----
Digestion	-----
Nourishment	-----
Enjoyable gustation	-----

### iii. Syntactic Analysis

- 1) The syntactic structure of the proverb is a sentence.
- 2) The word class is indicated as follows:

Source	Target
Spilt milk	Misfortune; past
Verb+ Noun	Noun

### 6) Sample 6

**Cast no dirt in the well that gives you water** (Collis, 1992:5).

#### i.General Meaning

The general meaning of this proverb means do not turn on someone that has supported

you.

**ii. Metaphorical Meaning**

This proverb is used metaphorically as giving advice. It has two indications. The first is used to mean not to turn against a benefactor, a friend, or supporter. The second means if someone is providing you with necessities, you shouldn't disrespect him/her and be ungrateful or criticize his/her behavior. Let, s/he turns around and takes away what you need. It is an orientational metaphor, which consists of spatial orientational terms (in the well). It consists of two main domains: the source domain is (water), meanwhile the target domain is (benefactor). Hence, the conceptual mapping of this proverb is as follows:

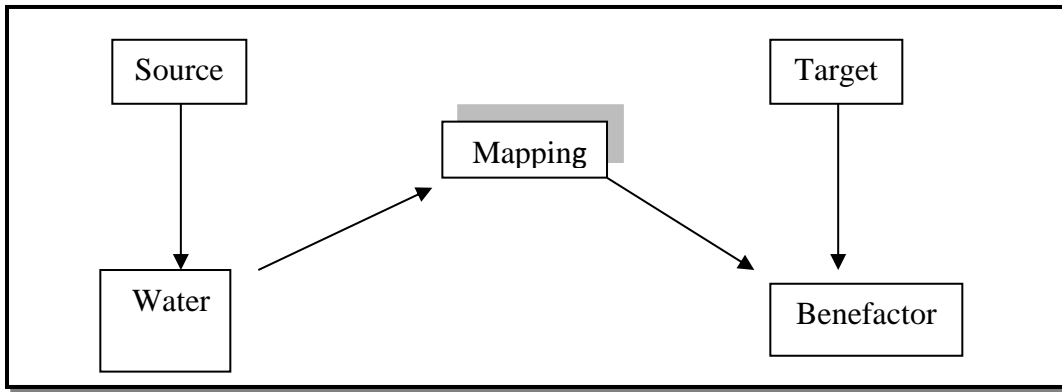


Figure (6): The Conceptual Mapping of Proverb 6.

These two domains provide extra information for understanding the use of proverb completely. The source domain (i.e. the drink domain) and its components are on the left and the target domain (i.e. the personal domain) and its components are on the right, see the following table.

Table (6): Drink Domain which Extended to the Personal Domain

Drink Domain	Personal Domain
Thirst	there is a prohibit on doing a thing
Intake of the drink	-----
Swallowing	-----
Digestion	-----
Nourishment	-----

Enjoyable gustation	-----
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### iii. Syntactic Analysis

- 1) The syntactic structure of the proverb is a sentence.
- 2) The word class is indicated as follows:

Source	Target
Water	Benefactor
Noun	Noun

## 6. FINDINGS

In cognitive view, metaphor deals with thought and reason rather than linguistic expression. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that metaphor is define as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. As understanding the pattern of understanding one conceptual, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) divided two conceptual domains into source domain and target domain. Types of metaphor (structural, orientational, ontological) and metaphorical meaning ( the use of proverbs such as: giving advice, warning, irony and wisdom) are found in drink proverbs. In addition to syntactic level found with various word class.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The study reaches the following conclusions:

- 1) The source and target domains in conceptual metaphor have a basic role in understanding the meaning of drink proverbs in English. Through the source domain (the concrete), the target domain (the abstract) is understood. Also, there is a strong relationship between elements of conceptual metaphor which is used to facilitate the process of communication. Thus, the first and the second hypotheses in this study have been verified.
- 2) Conceptual metaphors do not occur randomly, and they have a basis in context, human's physical experience, and cultural experience.
- 3) Conceptual Metaphors are unconscious processes. They occur unconsciously through conversations.
- 4) Proverbs occur in various syntactic structures and various word classes with all types of metaphor, and they carry different messages within different situations.

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