

## **Cultural Diversity and Heart Metaphor in Arabic**

This paper presents findings from the most geographically comprehensive corpus-based investigation of Arabic heart metaphor conducted to date. Drawing on 1,570 naturalistic tokens collected from the X platform across eighteen Arabic-speaking countries, and applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2000, 2005) alongside the MIPVU identification protocol (Steen et al., 2010), the study addresses a dual question that existing literature has left largely unanswered: which metaphorical frames structure Arabic heart discourse, and how is their relative prominence distributed across a typologically and dialectally diverse range of speech communities? Twenty-one distinct metaphorical frames were identified. The four highest-frequency categories — THE HEART IS A PERSON (53.5%), THE HEART IS AN OBJECT (17.5%), THE HEART IS A CONTAINER (12.2%), and THE HEART IS A PLACE (6.0%) — account for approximately 89% of the corpus, while a substantial periphery of culturally specific frames spans biological, economic, aesthetic, and sensory domains. K-Means cluster analysis revealed a statistically robust two-group solution ( $t = 5.65$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 2.73$ ), separating countries that concentrate metaphorical usage heavily around personification from those distributing usage more broadly across structural and spatial frames. A geographically coherent West-East gradient was additionally identified in the CONTAINER OF HONESTY/DEEP FEELING metaphor, aligning with known Arabic dialect groupings. The findings illuminate a metaphor system that is simultaneously convergent at the inventory level and systematically differentiated at the distributional level — a distinction with implications for cognitive linguistic theory, cross-dialectal Arabic research, and the universalism-relativism debate.

**Keywords:** Arabic dialects, heart metaphor, corpus linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, cross cultural