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Original Research Article

Relationship between Language and Architecture in a Cultural Context
(Case Study: Turkish Language and the Architecture of Traditional Houses in Tabriz)

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ABSTRACT

In interdisciplinary studies, the connection between language as intangible heritage and architecture as tangible heritage constitutes a crucial missing link in reviving a relationship that has been exposed to oblivion through modernization. The mechanism by which linguistic concepts are manifested in architectural form from the mental and linguistic world of a culture has not been systematically explained. By studying the cultural context of Azerbaijan, this research seeks to uncover this mechanism and to present a national model. How have the cultural metaphors of the Turkish language (Tabriz dialect) been manifested in the traditional houses of Tabriz during the Qajar period? The main objective of this research is to explicate the relationship between language and architecture in Iranian culture. By analyzing metaphors in Turkish and matching them with the traditional houses of Tabriz, a conceptual model capable of generalization to other cultural contexts in Iran is proposed. This research used a qualitative approach and a case study strategy. Data collection employed documentary methods and content analysis of cultural texts (folklore, bayatis, and dictionaries) to extract linguistic concepts, as well as field methods and plan analysis to examine architectural samples. The final analysis of the data was carried out using descriptive, analytical, and interpretive–historical methods to establish a link between abstract concepts and physical forms. The findings indicate that cultural concepts, organized in a coherent three-layer structure (fundamental beliefs, social norms, and physical manifestation), are clearly reflected in Turkish-language metaphors in the architecture of traditional houses in Tabriz. The final achievement is the presentation of the conceptual model "mental world (source) language → (path) → architecture (destination)," which explains this cognitive process: fundamental beliefs and social norms (source domain) are manifested in the form of cultural metaphors of the Turkish language of the Tabriz dialect (path domain) and function as a guiding map for architects and builders to materialize these concepts in physical elements, decorative details, and spatial relationships. Simultaneously, these concepts serve as a semantic and behavioral framework for residents, guiding and reinforcing the organization of behavioral patterns and everyday interactions within architectural space (the destination domain). This model emphasizes that the relationship between language and architecture is bidirectional; architecture, by providing the context of "lived experience," also contributes to the reproduction and stabilization of the same cultural cognition. The results of this research, by offering a deep understanding of the connection between intangible and tangible heritage, can serve as a guide for creating identity-oriented and culture-based architecture at the national level.

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Introduction

Architecture, as a physical manifestation emerging from culture, reflects a society's worldview, and traditional houses are readable texts for understanding the intellectual and social systems of their inhabitants. Language, as the most fundamental carrier of culture, likewise plays a key role in shaping human cognition of the world. However, the missing link in interdisciplinary studies is a systematic analysis of the mechanisms by which abstract linguistic concepts are manifested in architecture. The importance and necessity of this research are embedded in three aspects: first, the presentation of an interdisciplinary conceptual model (cultural linguistics and architecture) that goes beyond formalistic analyses; second, enhancing the value of historical houses from mere artifacts to living cultural documents through decoding hidden layers of meaning; and third, documenting and analyzing the subtle links between language and physical space that have been exposed to oblivion as a result of modernization processes. Owing to its rich ethno-linguistic diversity, Iran provides a unique context for studying these connections. By selecting the culture of Azerbaijan and the Turkish language (Tabriz dialect), the present research seeks to offer an analytical model that, while revealing the depth of this relationship in a case study, can also be generalized as a testable framework to other cultural contexts of Iran (such as Kurdish, Persian, Gilaki, etc.). Accordingly, to explicate this relationship, the present study seeks to answer the main research question: "How have the cultural metaphors of the Turkish language of the Tabriz dialect been manifested in the traditional houses of Qajar-period Tabriz?"

Research Background

A review of the interdisciplinary literature on language and architecture categorizes previous studies into three main groups. The first group, adopting a linguistic–semantic approach, has analyzed architecture as a "language" (Hasani & Norouzbarazjani, 2018; Fischer, 1991; Tavşan & Akbarzadeh, 2018). Although these studies are successful in structural analyses, they pay less attention to the cultural and cognitive roots that generate forms. The second group, with a phenomenological and semantic approach, regards language as the bearer of worldview and focuses on its role in the "perception" and "experience" of space (Barati, 2003; Barati, 2008, 2015; Barati et al., 2021; Pourmahdi Ghaem-Maghami, 2017), but often remains at a theoretical level and lacks a corporeal analytical model. The third group, from an anthropological perspective, examines the relationship between language and architecture within specific cultural contexts (Kabir Saber, 2015; Lakawa, 2015), yet usually confines itself to general correspondences and does not penetrate cognitive mechanisms. Moving beyond the limitations of these three approaches purely structural analyses, philosophical generalizations, and superficial correspondences the present research focuses on the mental process and, by employing "cultural metaphors," proposes a conceptual–operational model for analyzing and decoding the manifestation of linguistic concepts in architectural form.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature and employs documentary, descriptive, field-based, and historical–analytical methods. The theoretical foundations were developed through library research and content analysis, resulting in the formulation of the study's theoretical framework. Based on this framework, an operational model with a descriptive–analytical approach was designed to determine the structure of linguistic analyses. Subsequently, key metaphorical terms in the Turkish dialect of Tabriz were extracted from authoritative dictionaries such as Azerbaijan Dilinin İzahlı Lüğəti (Akhundov, 1966/1997), Dīwān Lughātal-Turk (Kashgari, 1074/2004), Comprehensive Etymological Turkish–Persian Dictionary (Dil Dəniz) (Hadi, 2007), as well as the official dictionary database of the Turkish Language Association (T.D.K sözlükleri, n.d.). The selection criteria were frequency of occurrence in folkloric texts and their fundamental role in cultural and social concepts such as family, religion, and social relations. To understand the applied context, folklore, proverbs, and bayatis were analyzed. In the final step, the extracted linguistic concepts were examined in the traditional houses of Tabriz through interpretive analysis. Utilizing plans, images, and field observations, this analysis revealed the physical manifestation of concepts in architectural elements and spatial functions of the houses (Fig. 1). The comparative case-study approach of the research elucidates the direct relationship between language, culture, and the built environment.

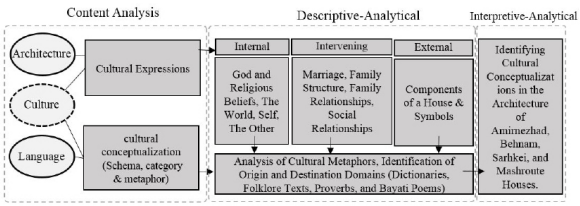


Fig. 1. Overall structure of the research.

Research Context and Case Studies

During the Qajar period, Tabriz, as the city of the crown prince's residence and a Dār al-Saltaneh, was the second most important city in Iran (Balilan Asl, 2014). This status was also associated with the importance of the Turkish language (from the Altaic language family); the language of the crown princes' court, which, as an aristocratic language, enjoyed high prestige among the people (Heyat, 1986, 18; Mashkour, 1996, 227). Houses from the Qajar period were selected for this research because they represent the last generation of traditional architecture and serve as an intermediate link between vernacular and modern architecture, and because they embody a rich and inspiring language

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for contemporary design (Rahravi, 2019). Among these, the Qajar houses of Tabriz are considered more authentic examples due to their lesser influence from Western architecture compared to the Pahlavi period (Jamali & Khandani, 2020, 9). Accordingly, four prominent houses (Table 1) located in the historical fabric of the city (Fig. 2) were selected as the case studies of this research, based on criteria such as belonging to the early and middle Qajar period, a high degree of authenticity and physical integrity, and suitable accessibility for research purposes.

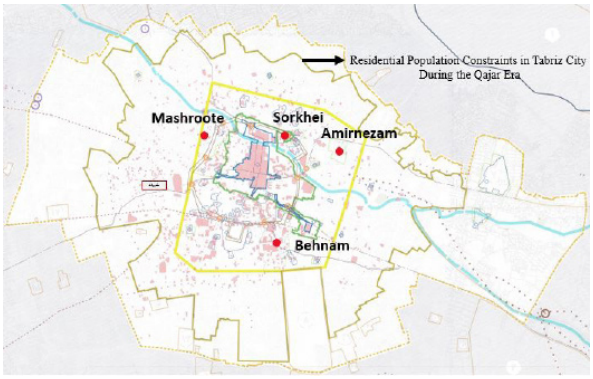


Fig. 2. Location of the case studies in the city of Tabriz. Source: Map archive of the General Directorate of Roads and Urban Development of East Azerbaijan.

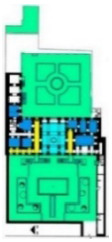
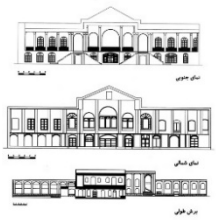
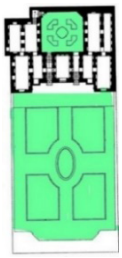
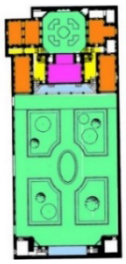
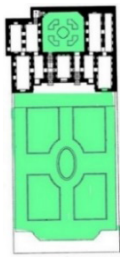
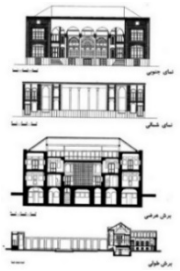
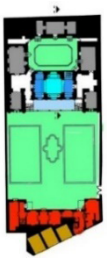
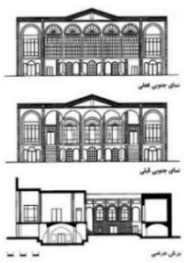
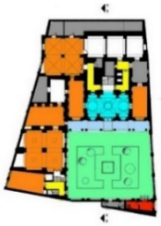
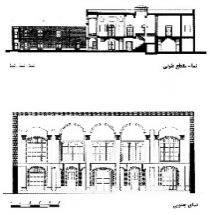
Theoretical Foundations

• Cultural linguistics

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the approach of "cultural linguistics," which examines the dynamic and bidirectional relationship

Table 1. Plans and Elevations of the Research Case Studies (Traditional Houses of Tabriz).

Iwan | Corridor | Courtyard | Howz Khaneh | Service Areas | Entrance | Tanabi hall | Howz Khaneh | Sardab

Houses	Basement Plan	Ground Floor Plan	First Floor Plan	Section-Elevation
Amir Nezam	-		-	
Behnam				
Sorkhei	-		-	
Mashrooteh	-		-	

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between language and culture. This approach, rooted in cognitive linguistics, considers language as reflective of culture (Sharifian, 2011) and analyzes the intersection of language, culture, and conceptualizations (Palmer, 1996, 5). By distancing itself from deterministic viewpoints, cultural linguistics emphasizes the mediating role of the human conceptual faculty between cultural experiences and language (Leuckert, 2022). The foundation of this analysis rests on concepts such as "cultural cognition," understood as collective cognition that goes beyond individual knowledge (Strauss & Quinn, 1997, 78), and "cultural conceptualization" (Sharifian, 2017). Ultimately, this approach provides the conceptual tools to understand how cultural concepts are represented and transmitted through language (Frank, 2015, p. 493).

• Cultural Conceptualization

Within the framework of cultural linguistics, culture is regarded as the primary source of conceptualization through cognitive structures such as schemas, categories, and metaphors (Palmer, 1996; Sharifian, 2013). This research specifically focuses on "cultural metaphors" as one of the key analytical tools of this approach (Sharifian, 2017, 30). The selection of this tool is based on the fact that the roots of human mental imagery lie in culture (Sharifian, 2017, 12), and metaphors, as reflections of these mental images, provide a deep understanding of how shared experiences of a cultural group are conceptualized. This perspective emphasizes that not only vocabulary but also all components of language including grammar, idioms, and proverbs carry and preserve a society's cultural values (Ter-Minasova, 2000, 69), and that the analysis of metaphors can reveal these latent values (Fig. 3).

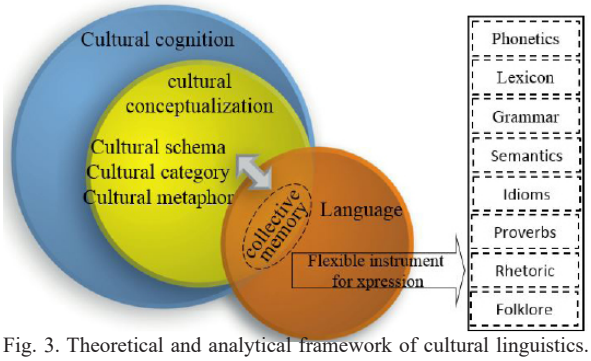


Fig. 3. Theoretical and analytical framework of cultural linguistics. Source: Sharifian, 2017.

• Cultural metaphors

The analytical tool of this research, the "cultural metaphor," refers to the process of conceptualizing an abstract domain (the target) in terms of a concrete domain (the source). For example, the conceptualization of "time" as a "commodity" (which can be spent or saved) is common in some cultures. The key distinguishing feature of these metaphors is their "cultural" nature; that is, these conceptual patterns are not universal (Sharifian, 2017, 17–18) and can differ fundamentally from one culture to another (Kövecses, 2010). It is precisely this cultural and non-universal characteristic that makes their analysis essential for understanding the specific worldview of a linguistic–cultural group. Fig. 4 illustrates the modeling of the source and target domains of cultural metaphors.

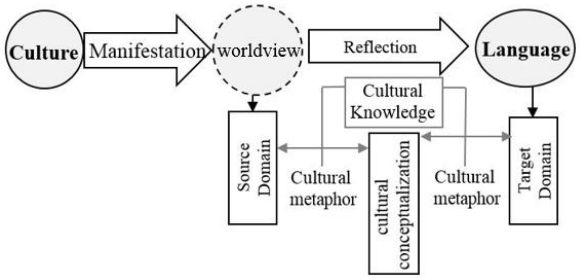


Fig. 4. Modeling of the cultural metaphor. Source: the authors, based on Sharifian, 2017.

• Culture and house architecture

Culture is one of the fundamental factors shaping human settlements and a central element in architecture (Khasto and Habib, 2016, 1-4). Architecture, especially housing, is not only the result of physical and technical factors but also of the complex interaction among a society's worldview, lifestyle, and social needs (Ziari et al., 2010, 1; Memarian, 2012, 375). The physical environment reflects behavioral patterns arising from cultural values and norms and acts as a mirror of the same culture (Altman, 1975/2003; Varmaghani & Soltanzade, 2018). In this regard, Rapoport (2003) considers culture to be the source of values and lifestyles that are directly manifested in the spatial arrangement of houses and in connection with the structure of the family and social relations. Accordingly, the manifestation of culture in house architecture can be analyzed in a three-layer structure (Yazdanfar et al., 2013). 1. Inner layer (fundamental beliefs and values): This deepest layer includes abstract beliefs such as attitude towards God, humility, and contentment (Faramarz Gharamaleki, 2013). 2. Middle layer (social norms and structures): This layer deals with concepts such as honor, hospitality, family structure, and social relations (Mohamad Hoseini et al., 2021). 3. Outer layer (physical and symbolic appearance): This layer includes the physical manifestation of the inner layers in architectural components, decorations, colors, and symbols. Fig. 5 clearly shows the process of culture's penetration from the most abstract levels to the most tangible aspects of architecture.

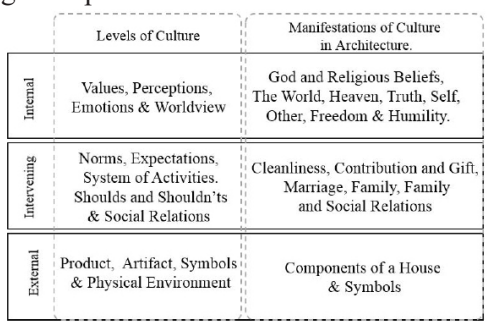


Fig. 5. Modeling the relationship between culture and architecture. Source: the authors.

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The theoretical framework of this research is based on the hypothesis that language and architecture are parallel manifestations of a society's cultural worldview. The link between these two domains is the human conceptual system, which organizes and expresses cultural experiences through "cultural metaphors." Accordingly, by employing the tools of cultural linguistics (metaphor analysis), it is possible to decode the semantic layers of architecture (the three-layer cultural model). In other words, by analyzing the source and target domains of familiar metaphors, the hidden conceptual roots underlying architectural forms, spaces, and symbols are revealed. The operational framework of the research (Fig. 6) applies an analytical–comparative model to uncover the relationship between Turkish language metaphors and their manifestations in the architecture of traditional houses in Tabriz.

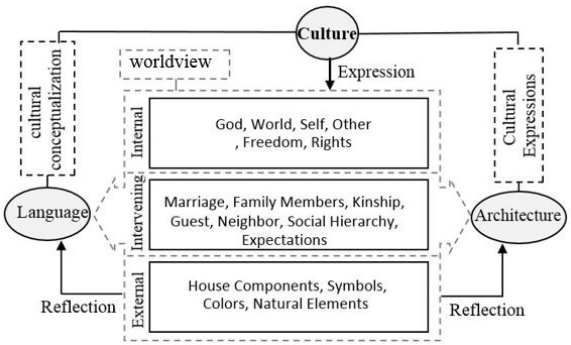
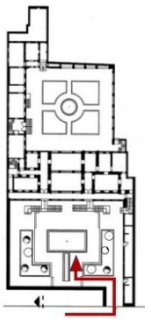
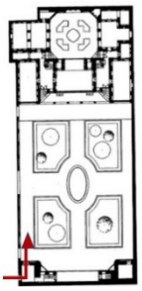
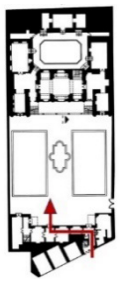
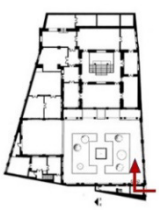


Fig. 6. Operational framework of the research. Source: the authors.

Findings

In this section, based on the research's operational framework, metaphorical terms reflecting culture in architecture are analyzed at three levels inner, middle, and outer in the Turkish language (Tabriz dialect).

Table 2. Manifestation of the metaphor "The Self Is the Other" through the number of openings and spatial hierarchy in the case studies. Source: the authors.

Houses	Presence of a Single Opening to the House	Spatial Hierarchy
Amir Nezam		Public (entrance and outer courtyard); semi-public (iwan, corridors, rooms, and tanabi); semi-private (corridor, rooms); private (inner courtyard, corridor, room)
Behnam		Public (entrance and outer courtyard); semi-public (iwan and tanabi); semi-private (corridor, rooms); private (inner courtyard, room)
Sorkhei		Public (entrance and outer courtyard); semi-public (iwan, corridors, rooms, and tanabi); semi-private (secondary entrance, rooms); private (inner courtyard, corridor, room)
Mashrooteh		Public (entrance and outer courtyard); semi-public (howz-khaneh, vestibule, rooms, and tanabi); semi-private (corridor, rooms); private (rooms)

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Subsequently, the resulting concepts are identified and explicated in different parts of the traditional houses of Tabriz.

• Analysis of cultural metaphors: inner layer

- God

The worldview of Turkish speakers regarding God is revealed through the cultural metaphors of their language. The metaphor "God is a confidant" (/Tanrı mənim sirdaşım…/) denotes an intimate and personal relationship, while the spatial metaphor "the sky is the abode of God" (/göl bacadan bax Tanrı…/) adds a transcendent dimension to it (Kiani, 2018, 372, 715). This duality of intimacy transcendence has found physical expression in the architecture of Tabriz houses: the introversion of space creates a realm for inner dialogue with the "confidant," and openness toward the sky connects it to the divine sphere (Balkhari, 2009, 398). The pool, moreover, through reflecting the sky and its purifying role, mediates between earth and heaven (Belali Oskui & Nazari, 2020). In addition, abstract ornamentation and devotional practices reproduce this worldview in the minds of the inhabitants (Fig. 7).

- The World

Speakers of the Turkish language conceptualize the world through the metaphor "the world is a mirror" (/…bu dünya bir güzgüdür…/ "this world is a mirror"), which emphasizes the notions of reflection, transience, and the distance between observer and observed (Doosti, 2000, 83). This metaphor is materialized in the architecture of Tabriz houses through elements such as mirrorwork in the tanabi, orsi windows, and, especially, the reflection of images in the water of the pool (Fig. 8). This arrangement promotes the act of "contemplation" rather than "possession," since the reflected image disappears upon touch. Daily encounters with these unstable reflections cyclically reproduce and reinforce the concept of "the world as a mirror" in the minds of the inhabitants.

- The Self

In the mental world of Turkish speakers, the etymological connection between /öz/ (self), /özgə/ (other), and /özgürlük/ (freedom) (Hadi, 2007) forms a fundamental principle: "freedom is contingent upon respecting the boundary of the other, who is a part of the self." This concept manifests in the architecture of Tabriz houses through principles such as spatial hierarchy, privacy, entrance thresholds, and the avoidance of overlooking neighbors (Table 2). As recorded in travelogues, this principle is realized through elements such as continuous walls facing the passageway (Sheil, 1856/1989) and modest entrances that conceal the richness of the interior (Abouzia & Ghezlebash, 1985, 170). Such architecture, by institutionalizing the practice of respect for "the other as the self," cyclically reproduces the original linguistic worldview.

A summary of the analysis of cultural–linguistic metaphors and their manifestation in the architecture of traditional houses in Tabriz (inner-layer sample) is presented in Table 3.

• Analysis of cultural metaphors of the middle layer in architecture

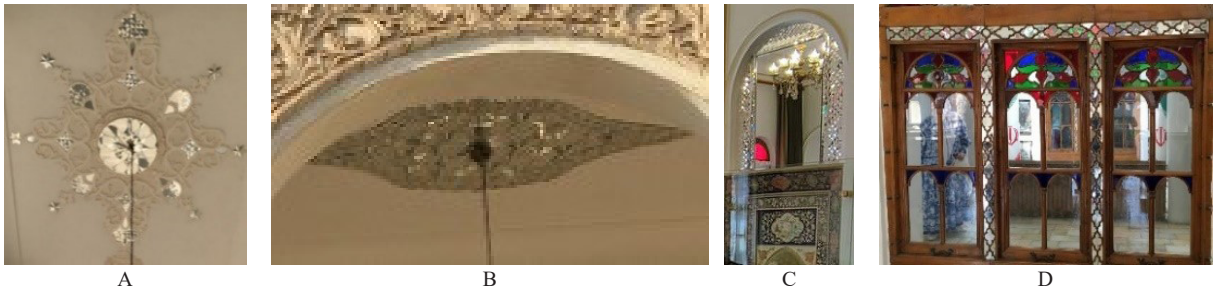
In this section, cultural metaphors related to the concepts of marriage, family structure, kinship, guest, and neighbor are examined.

- Marriage

In the mental world of Turkish speakers, marriage is metaphorically understood as becoming a homeowner; thus, the infinitive /evlənmək/ means "to acquire a house" (Akhundov, 1966/1997), and this association forms the metaphor "marriage is



Fig. 7. Manifestation of the metaphor "God is the Confidant" in the geometric centrality and the reflection of the sky in the pools of A) Amir Nezam, B) Behnam, C) Sorkhei, and D) Mashrooteh houses.



A B C D

Fig. 8. Manifestation of the metaphor "The World is a Mirror" in the ornamentation of A)Amir Nezam, B) Behnam, C) Sorkhei, and D) Mashrooteh houses.

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Table 3. Analysis of cultural–linguistic metaphors in the inner layer: from mind to language and manifestation in the architecture of traditional houses of Tabriz.

Mental World (Source)	Turkish Language (Target)	Architecture of Traditional Houses of Tabriz (Manifestation)	Conceptual Inference
Confidant	Tanrı (God)	Physical elements: pool, iwan, and orsi (purity, contemplation, and manifestation of divine light); decorative elements: brickwork, plasterwork, mirrors, and glass symbolizing multiplicity and unity; spatial relations: formal hierarchy (the path toward unity); actions and behaviors: prayer and meditation.	Space as the ground of connection between humans and God
Determiner of fate	Felek (the heavens/fate)	Physical elements: pool (mirror of the sky), iwan (visual movement); decorative elements: glasswork (evocation of the sky); spatial relations: vertical axis (link between earth and heaven); actions and behaviors: contemplation and presence before destiny.	Space as a mediator between Earth and the celestial realm
Mirror	Dünya (the world)	Physical elements: pool (water mirror), iwan, hearth, orsi, vestibule (a setting for mirror-work); decorative elements: mirror-work (display of appearances); spatial relations: meaning-making across levels of spatial cognition; actions and behaviors: reminder of the material transience of the world.	The world is the fleeting reflection of spiritual truth.
Stranger / Freedom	Öz (self)	Physical elements: indirect entrance, inner and outer courtyards; decorations: simple brick façades (harmony with neighbors and avoidance of ostentation); spatial relations: introversion, spatial hierarchy, separation of inner and outer domains; actions and behaviors: ethical conduct (prohibition of dominance and intrusion into others' privacy).	Freedom in relation to the other; ethical spatialization based on self-knowledge and respect for boundaries

becoming a homeowner" (/ana məni evləndir…/) (Kiani, 2018, 560). Within this perspective, the house is conceived as a "place of tranquility" rather than merely a shelter (Naqibi & Zamani, 2011). This meaning is embodied in the architecture of Tabriz: the "courtyard" functions as the organizing element of space (Moradi et al., 2018), which, by separating territories, balances "individual privacy" and, through connections to the houses of relatives, "collective privacy" (Khamenehzadeh, 2017). The everyday experience of this balance transforms the concept of the house into a ground of tranquility and cyclically reproduces the metaphorical link between marriage and home in the minds of the inhabitants (Table 4).

- **Family structure**

In Turkish, the metaphor "the father is a column" (T.D.K. sözlükleri, n.d.), which conveys strength and stability, is directly reflected in traditional architecture (Fig. 9). Prominent columns on the main façade, beyond their structural function, symbolize the father's power and support and, by marking the threshold of entry, emphasize his role as the guardian of privacy. The constant presence of this physical symbol cyclically reproduces and stabilizes this worldview in the minds of the residents and the community.

The role of the husband in the Turkish worldview is understood through the metaphor of a "protective container," as reflected in the proverb /pəniri dəri saxlar, xanımı əri saxlar/ ("the rind protects the cheese, the husband protects the wife") (Ghorbani, 2010, 19). This meaning leads to the separation of the andaruni (women's domain) from the biruni (men's space) in architecture, where hierarchical entrances transform the andaruni into a "secure container" and place control of access in women's hands (Gobineau, 1923/1999). In contrast, the mother is defined by the metaphor "the mother is a dam" (/ata seldir, ana göldür/) (Ghorbani, 2010, 18), which denotes the management of family resources. This perspective turns the house into a "managerial domain" of women, with diverse open, semi-open, and enclosed spaces serving as instruments for its realization. Thus, the lived experience of this spatial differentiation reproduces a worldview based on complementary roles of protector (man) and manager (woman) (Table 5).

In the mental world of Turkish speakers, /oğlan/ (son) symbolizes the "continuity of the lineage" and is deeply rooted in the concept of "birth" (Hadi, 2007). This worldview is manifested in domestic architecture through a "generative core," in which courtyard organization allows the addition of new units for sons, transforming the physical growth of the house into a sign of the "multiplication of the lineage." The value of the daughter as a "precious gem" is embedded in the root of the word /qız/ (associated with rarity and gold) (Hadi, 2007), leading to the architectural principle



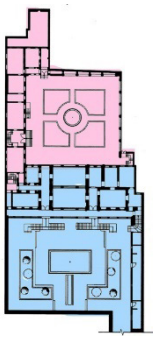
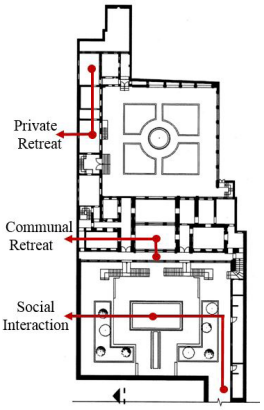
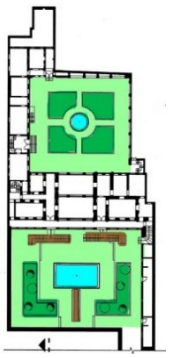
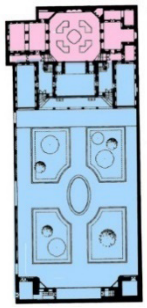
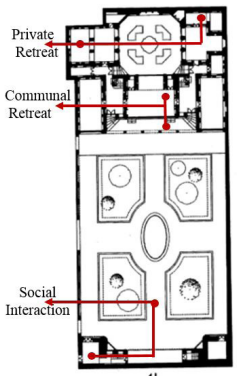
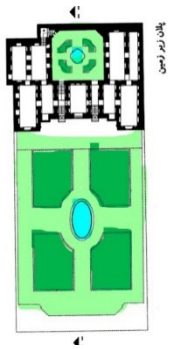
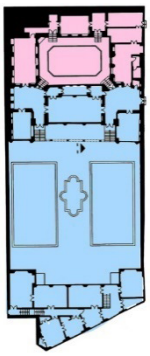
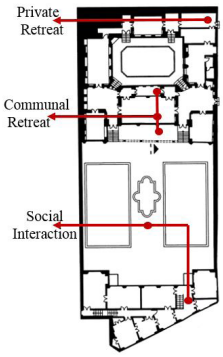
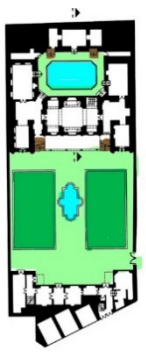
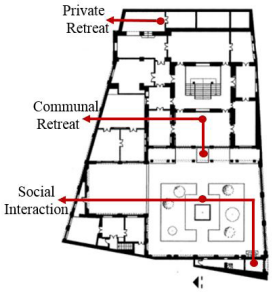
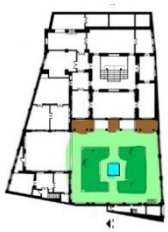
A B C D

Fig. 9: Manifestation of the metaphor "The Father is the Column" through the central façade column of A) Amir Nezam, B) Behnam, C) Sorkhei, and D) Mashrooteh houses.

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Table 4. Manifestation of the metaphor "Marriage is becoming a homeowner" in the case studies. Source: the authors.

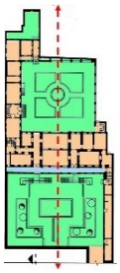
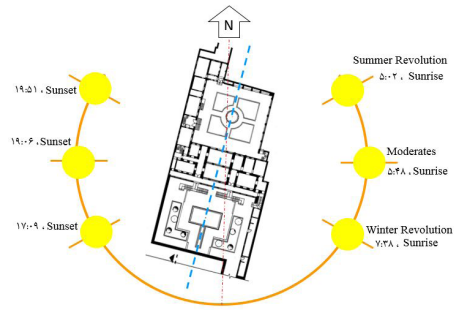
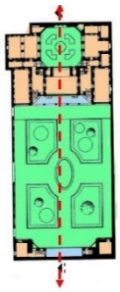
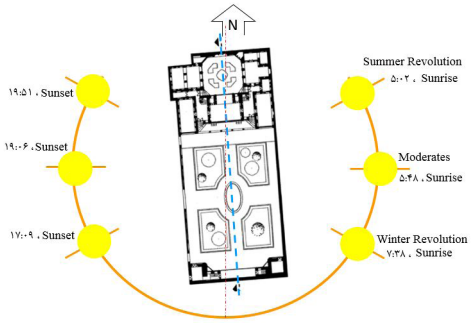
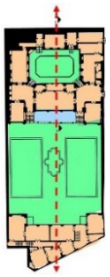
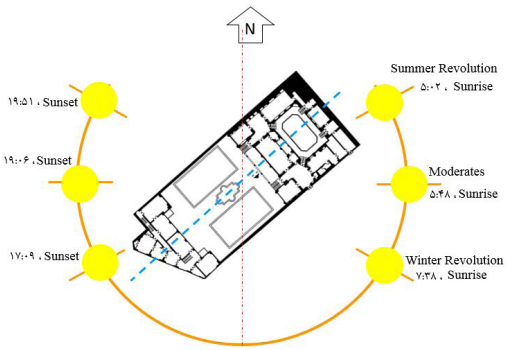
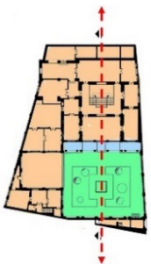
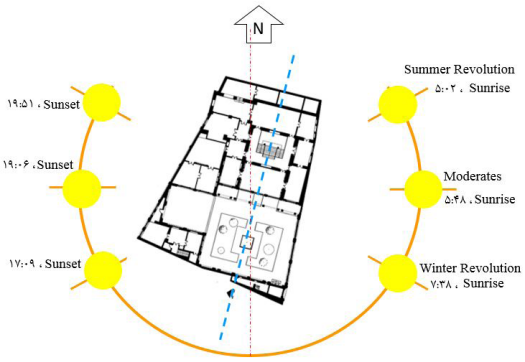
Houses	Inner and Outer Domains	Spatial Diversity	Water and Nature
Amir Nezam			
Behnam			
Sorkhei			
Mashrooteh			

of privacy (Firuzabadi, 1410) and the complete separation of the andaruni (inner quarters) from the biruni (outer quarters). Physical elements such as dual courtyards and the absence of outward views turn the andaruni into a "secure safe" (Orsolle, 1885/2003). The everyday lives of girls in this protected space reproduce the initial worldview. The concept of brotherhood and sisterhood in /qardaş/, derived from /qarindaş/ ("of the same womb"), denotes a fundamental bond (Hadi, 2007). In architecture, this

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Table 5. Manifestation of the metaphor "The Mother is a Dam" in the case studies. Source: the authors.

Houses	Spatial Diversity	Orientation	Possibility of Activities across Seasons
Amir Nezam			Summer morning, noon, and afternoon activities: inner courtyard; Winter morning, noon, and afternoon activities: iwan and outer courtyard
Behnam			Summer morning, noon, and afternoon activities: inner courtyard; Winter morning, noon, and afternoon activities: iwan and outer courtyard
Sorkhei			Summer morning and noon activities: inner courtyard; Summer afternoon activities: outer courtyard; Winter morning, noon, and afternoon activities: iwan and outer courtyard
Mashrooteh			Iwan and the outer courtyard accommodated winter morning, noon, and afternoon activities; due to the absence of an inner courtyard, summer morning, noon, and afternoon activities were also conducted in the outer courtyard

bond is materialized through "collective retreats" and semi-private spaces such as corners and shahneshins, which, by providing a setting for intimate gatherings, transform the abstract concept of /qarindaş/ into an emotional reality.

- **Kinship and social relations**

In the mental world of Turkish language speakers, / el-gün/ (kinship/community) is understood through metaphors such as the "life-giving sun" /el/ (people) and /gün/ (sun) (Hadi, 2007), and the "inseparable

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bond of flesh and nail" /ət dırnağdan ayrılmaz/ ("flesh does not separate from the nail") (Dousti, 1379, 28). This worldview, which necessitates honoring the guest, turns the house into the social center of relatives and allocates the best space to the "guest room." Elements such as the courtyard, ivan, and ample food storage spaces provide the physical infrastructure for this principle (Table 6). By delivering the spatial setting for the ritual of guest honoring, architecture concretizes and cyclically reproduces a worldview centered on kinship.

The cultural worldview surrounding the concept of /qonaq/ (guest) in Turkish is grounded in the etymological metaphor of a "bird that has landed," derived from the verb /qonmaq/ (to land). This worldview views the guest as in need of tranquility and the host as the provider of a "safe nest." This conceptualization leads, in architecture, to the absolute separation of the guest's domain (biruni) from that of the family (andaruni). In traditional houses of Tabriz, the guest space /qonaq evi/ constitutes a semi-independent unit with a central core, the tannabi, and complementary spaces such as the ivan, which ensure the guest's complete independence (Table 7). Thus,

Table 6. Manifestation of the metaphor "kin and relatives are flesh attached to the nail" in the case studies. Source: Authors.

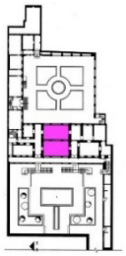
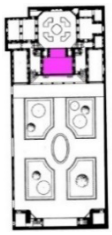
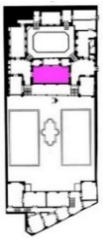
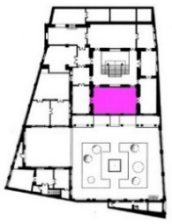
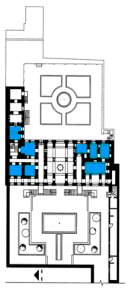
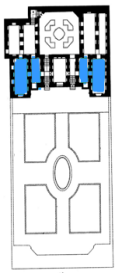
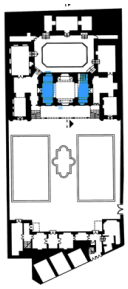
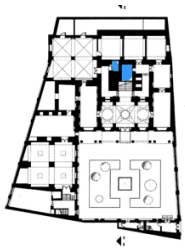
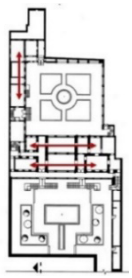
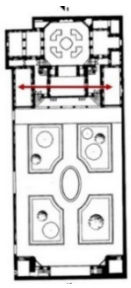
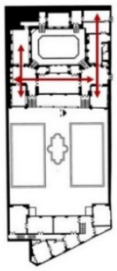
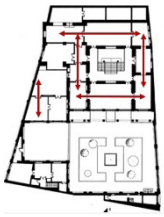
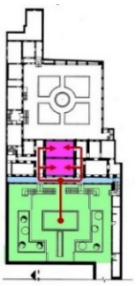
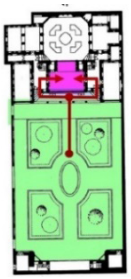
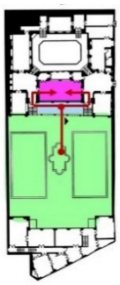
	Amir Nezam	Behnam	Sorkhei	Mashrooteh
Tannabi The largest room				
Cellar				
Spatial flexibility				

Table 7: Manifestation of the metaphor "the guest is a bird that has nested" in the case studies. Source: Authors.

	Amir Nezam	Behnam	Sorkhei	Mashrooteh
Direct connection of the courtyard and balcony with the tannabi				-
Location of tannabi windows	Southern façade, overlooking the public courtyard	Southern façade, overlooking the public courtyard	Southern façade, overlooking the public courtyard	Southern façade, overlooking the public courtyard

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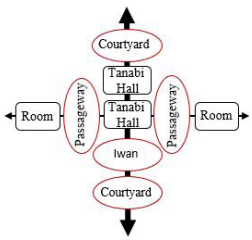
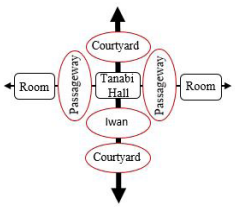
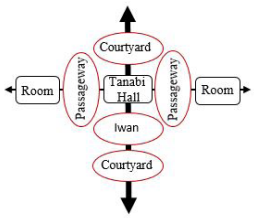
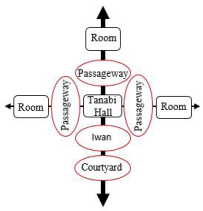
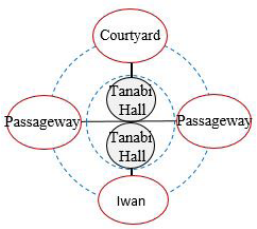
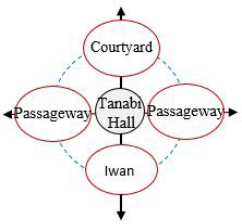
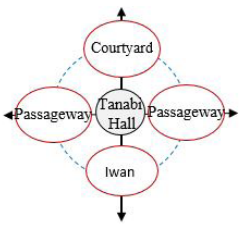
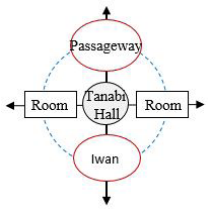
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architecture, by creating the stage for the ritual of honoring the guest, objectifies the lived experience of the "safe nest" and cyclically reproduces this worldview.

While Islamic culture regards the guest as the "beloved of God" and worthy of honor (Memarian et al., 2010), and Western culture considers the guest a threat to privacy (Waithe, 2006; Altman, 1975/2003), the mental world of Turkish speakers offers a third paradigm. In this worldview, the expression /qonağa qulluq eləmək/ ("servitude to the guest") creates a radical metaphor: "the guest is a deity." This mental structure establishes a vertical relationship between the host (servant) and the guest (deity) (Hadi, 2007) and directs the spatial organization of the house. The tannabi the guest room is located not at the periphery, but at the physical and symbolic heart of the house, reflecting the exalted position of the guest in the family's hierarchy of values. The ritual of continuous hospitality enacted in this space represents the lived experience of "servitude." By transforming the tannabi into a "mihrab," architecture creates the stage for this ritual. Table 8 illustrates the manifestation of this metaphor in the research case studies. The repetition of such experiences transforms the linguistic metaphor from an abstract concept into a social reality, sanctifying and reproducing it within the cycle of residents' values.

In the Turkish language, the concept of /qonšu/ (neighbor) originates from a threefold metaphorical system: "partner" (derived from the root /qonušmaq/ meaning co-presence or sitting together) (Hadi, 2007); "conversational companion" (from the same root meaning to converse); and "healing" (emerging from oral literature such as /…pis gündə qonšum mənəm/). This worldview, which aligns with Max Weber's ideas (Weber, 1922) on neighborly interactions and mutual assistance, as well as the three dimensions of neighborhood spatial, emotional, and social proposed by Davis and Herbert (Davis & Herbert, 1993) (cited in Seddigh Sarvestani & Nimroozi, 2010), is directly translated into the architectural physical program. Threshold spaces such as "entrance platforms" and the hashti become the setting for realizing the metaphor of "conversation" and everyday interactions (Valizadeh Oghani, 2019), while more interior elements such as "large food storage rooms" and the "courtyard" provide the physical capacity for the metaphor of "healing" and mutual support. Ultimately, the lived experience resulting from these spaces conversation on platforms and reciprocal assistance transforms that metaphorical system into a social reality and reproduces it cyclically. The synthesis of the analysis of cultural–linguistic metaphors and their manifestation in the architecture of traditional houses of Tabriz (meso-level sample) is presented in Table 9.

Table 8. Manifestation of the metaphor "The guest is God" in the case studies (Source: Authors)

Houses	Amir Nezam	Behnam	Sorkhei	Mashrooteh
Centrality				
Juxtaposition				

• Analysis of cultural metaphors in the outer layer: cultural manifestations in architecture

In this section, cultural metaphors related to natural elements, such as water and the sun, are presented.

- /Su/ – Water

In the Turkish worldview, water (/su/) is understood through a metaphorical system, the architectural manifestation of which in traditional houses is the pool (howz). These metaphors and their architectural translation are as follows:

Source: The metaphor "Water is the source" (from the expression /su bashdan bulanikdi/) manifests in the geometric and functional centrality of the pool in the house.

Passage of life: "Water is the passage of life" (from the poem /su gələr axar gedər…/) (Kiani, 2018) is embodied in the linear and sequential design of pools along the central axis of the house.

Messenger: "Water is a messenger (of greetings and memory)" (from Bayati poetry such as /araz salam

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Table 9. Analysis of cultural–linguistic metaphors at the middle layer; from mind to language and their manifestation in the architecture of traditional houses of Tabriz.

Mental World (Source)	Turkish Language (Target)	Architecture of Traditional Houses of Tabriz (Manifestation)	Conceptual Inference
Becoming a homeowner	/evlənmək/ (marriage)	Physical elements: entrance, courtyard (center of life), ivan and howzkhaneh (space of tranquility), andaruni (realm of seclusion); decorative elements: brickwork, mirrorwork, karbandi, and stucco (enrichment of space); spatial relations: privacy, hierarchy, separation of andaruni/biruni, open/closed contrast, and degrees of thresholdness; actions and behaviors: hospitality, cleanliness, and seclusion (individual/collective).	Marriage is settling into shared tranquility; the house reflects the couple's material and spiritual bond.
Column	Father	Physical elements: load-bearing columns in the ivan and howzkhaneh; decorative elements: capital decorations (muqarnas, stucco) to emphasize grandeur; spatial relations: visual and structural emphasis on vertical elements; actions and behaviors: respect for the father as the household's pillar.	Consolidation of paternal authority through symbolic–structural architectural elements.
Protective container	Husband	Physical elements: indirect entrance, courtyards, ivan, tannabi, winding corridors; spatial relations: spatial hierarchy and complete separation of andaruni and biruni to create privacy; actions and behaviors: protection and provision of security.	Embodiment of the man's protective role through architectural spatial layers.
Barrier	Mother	Physical elements: service spaces (matbakh, basement) and spaces of daily activity (courtyard, howzkhaneh); spatial relations: diversity of work and living spaces; climatic orientation and introverted organization of spaces around the courtyard; actions and behaviors: housekeeping, frugality, and diligence.	Institutionalization of women's managerial role in the household economy through the functional diversity of spaces.
Birth and multiplication	Son	Physical elements: addition of courtyards, tannabis, and independent rooms to the original structure; decorative elements: repetition of decorations in new sections (for visual unity); spatial relations: flexible plan for expansion and definition of new hierarchies of the extended family; actions and behaviors: support for the new family within the paternal house.	Objectification of the continuity of the paternal lineage through the expandable and flexible physical structure of the house.
Precious	Daughter	Physical elements: andaruni, private rooms and corridors (for privacy control); decorative elements: delicate interior decorations as symbols of their valued presence; spatial relations: hierarchy and spatial separation (andaruni/biruni) to control interactions; actions and behaviors: family protection and presence within the secure realm of the house.	Physical embodiment of the protective value attributed to daughters through the creation of impermeable spatial layers.
Sun of life; flesh attached to the nail	Kin and relatives	Physical elements: reception spaces (courtyard, ivan, tannabi) and support spaces (matbakh, basement); decorative elements: concentration of decorations in the guest room to create a pleasant and respectful space; spatial relations: spatial flexibility for hosting, alongside separation of andaruni/biruni to preserve privacy; actions and behaviors: hospitality, continuous housekeeping, and respect for relatives.	Architectural design for the effortless and continual presence of relatives.
Nesting bird / Deity	Guest	Physical elements: tannabi (shahneshin) as the principal guest room; and entrance spaces, hashti, and ivan as the path of honoring and access; decorative elements: concentration of the richest decorations (mirrorwork, stucco) in the tannabi to distinguish the space and exalt the guest's status; spatial relations: centrality (intersection of principal axes and focal point of the house); spatial independence (controlled access and proximity to services); and functional flexibility; actions and behaviors: exceptional hospitality; humility and maximum respect by the host in honoring the guest.	Definition of the guest's space and status with independence and respect.
Harmonious bird / Partner / Healer	Neighbor	Physical elements: spaces of collective interaction: hashti, courtyards (andaruni/biruni), ivan, and tannabi; decorative elements: inviting decorations in semi-public spaces such as the hashti; spatial relations: intermediary spaces for controlled interaction; gender-based separation (andaruni/biruni) for organizing participation; and ease of access between houses; actions and behaviors: everyday interactions (evening gatherings) and collective participation (shared tasks, shared spaces and tools).	Embodiment of a multifaceted social support network; creation of spaces that strengthen interaction, practical participation, and mutual support in times of need.

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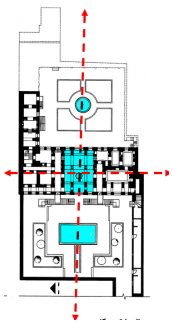
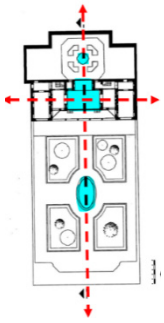
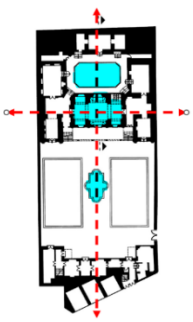
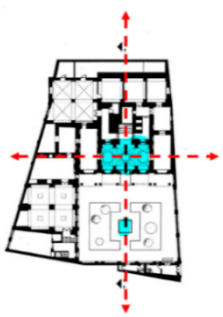
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getirer…/), turning the pool into the center of social interactions and collective memory.
Tranquility and hospitality: "Water represents tranquility and hospitality" (from the concepts / orayim su sapdi/ and /kochalr su sapmishim…/) (Mohammadouf, 1991), which is enacted physically through water sprinkling for cooling (Wilber, 1962/1969) and creating comfort.
Table 10 illustrates the manifestation of these water-related cultural metaphors in traditional houses of Tabriz. Therefore, the pool transcends its functional role and becomes an artistic object. Everyday actions around it (gathering, sprinkling water) transform the metaphorical system of water into a lived and tangible experience, cyclically reproduced in residents' minds.

- **/Gün/ – Sun**

In the Turkish mental world, the word /gün/ intertwines the concepts of "sun," "day," and "life" (Hadi, 2007), forming the fundamental metaphor "Sun = Life"; e.g., in /günüm bəla gəshdi/ (my day/life passed this way). This understanding also appears in naming the cardinal directions as a cognitive map: /gün doğan/ (East/birth), /günî/ (South/peak of life), /gün batan/ (West/death). This mental map directly corresponds to the spatial organization of Tabriz houses. Architects oriented the houses toward /günî/ so that the metaphor "South = peak of life and warmth" became a survival strategy in the cold climate. Main living spaces were placed on the northern side of the courtyard (facing south) to receive maximum sunlight and warmth. This

Table 10. Cultural Metaphors of Water in Traditional Houses of Tabriz. Source: Authors.

Amir Nezam	Behnam	Sorkhei	Mashrooteh
			

orientation was reinforced by architectural elements such as expansive windows and orsi (stained glass), which allowed light to penetrate deep into the spaces. Consequently, architecture synchronized residents' daily actions with the sun cycle, transforming /gün görmək/ (seeing the sun / good life) from an abstract concept into a tangible experience of thermal and psychological comfort. This completes a full cycle: the mental world (/gün/), spatial design (south-facing orientation), and lived action reproduce the cultural belief that "sunlit life is a good life." A summary of the analysis of cultural-linguistic metaphors and their manifestation in the architecture of traditional Tabriz houses (example of the exterior surface) is presented in Table 11.

Discussion

The findings indicate that Qajar-era traditional houses in Tabriz are more than mere physical structures they are three-dimensional, inhabitable manifestations of residents' mental worlds, encoded in Tabriz Turkish metaphors. Data analysis reveals a dynamic, cyclical, and self-reproducing relationship rather than a linear, one-way connection. This relationship can be conceptualized as a holistic model that illustrates the three-way interaction among the mental world (source domain), language (path/domain of mediation), and architecture (target domain) within the broader cultural context (Fig. 10).

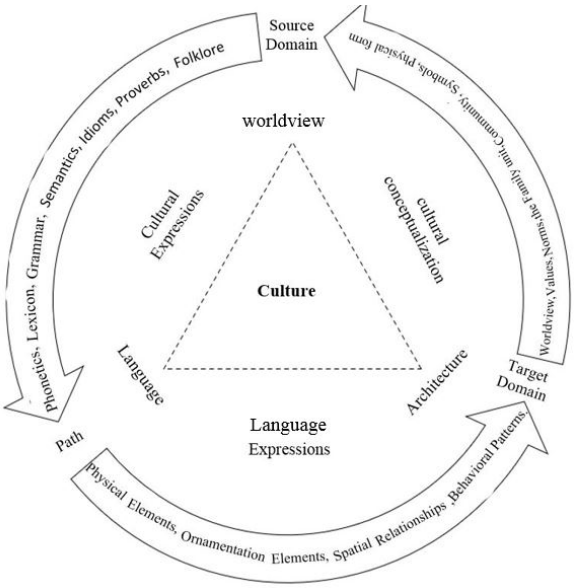


Fig. 10. Conceptual diagram of the structural relationship between language and architecture in the cultural context.

- **This model as a lived metaphor and the cycle of cultural reproduction**

This model demonstrates that the house becomes a lived metaphor, in which cultural values are not only manifested but continuously enacted and reproduced. The processes of this cycle can be described in two main phases: production and reproduction.

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Table 11. Analysis of Cultural–Linguistic Metaphors in the Outer Layer; from Mind to Language to Architectural Manifestation in Traditional Houses of Tabriz.

Mental World (Source)	Turkish Language (Target)	Architecture of Traditional Houses of Tabriz (Manifestation)	Conceptual Inference
Water: source of life, passage of time, messenger, hospitality	/su/	Physical elements: central water features: pool (courtyard center) and howzkhaneh (central house space); Decorative elements: ceiling karbandi above the pool; Spatial relations: axiality and spatial centrality through pool placement as a visual and semantic focal point; Actions/Behaviors: symbolic (water sanctity, passage of life) and social (cleanliness, hospitality, interaction, collective memory).	Materialization of water as a vital element organizes spatial structure (centrality) and serves as a stage for symbolic and social actions.
Sun: symbol of life's passage (birth & death), good days (hope), and clarity	/gün/	Physical elements: light-permeable structures: central courtyard, tannabi, expansive windows (orsi), plastered surfaces; Decorative elements: light-focused decorations: colored glass, mirrorwork (multiplying light), sun motifs (shamse); Spatial relations: south-facing orientation (/güni/), courtyard-centered layout for maximum light, light hierarchy from courtyard inward; Actions/Behaviors: aligning daily activities with sunlight, seeking sun for vitality and hope.	Architecture designed as a living solar calendar; intelligent orientation, energy management, ensuring hope for bright days, and promoting transparency/clarity.

1. Production Phase: From the Mental World to Architectural Form

This phase illustrates the process of translating abstract cultural concepts into spatial forms through two key stages:

Stage 1: From Source to Path (Reflecting the Mental World in Language)

The mental world of the cultural group, consisting of inner (beliefs such as "God is a secret") and middle (norms such as "marriage") layers, is the domain of origin of this process. The Turkish language, in the meantime, plays a dual role as the "domain of the path": first, as a repository of collective memory, it stores this worldview in the form of metaphors and proverbs ("a girl is precious") and second, as a flexible means of transmission, it prepares these abstract concepts for manifestation in the material world.

Stage 2: From Path to Destination (Manifestation of Language in Architecture)

The findings showed that these linguistic-cultural concepts are embodied in four distinct but intertwined layers of architecture:

In physical spaces: The vital spaces of the house are direct representations of key values. The magnificent spire embodies the metaphor of "the guest is the deity," the courtyards embody the concepts of privacy and extended family, and the sturdy pillars of the porch demonstrate the metaphor of "the father is the pillar."

In decorations: Islamic motifs, with their abstract and unifying nature, reflect a monotheistic worldview ("God is the secret"), and mirroring reminds the inhabitants of the metaphor "the world is a mirror" and the concept of the impermanence of the material world.

In spatial relations, the most abstract concepts are reflected in the house's spatial organization. The strict separation of interior and exterior is the physical embodiment of the concepts of "seclusion" and "privacy," which are rooted in metaphors such as "the husband is the container that holds the wife."

In action and behavior: This layer is the culmination of the production phase, where concepts such as "hospitality" and "seclusion" are transformed into everyday "action" in spaces designed precisely for this purpose (the turban, private rooms).

2. Reproduction Phase: Architecture as a Cultural Nexus

The most important aspect of the presented model is the feedback loop from the destination domain (architecture) to the source domain (mental world). This loop shows that architecture is not simply a passive product of culture, but is itself an active agent and a living center in the reproduction of culture. The person who lives in these houses, through daily experience of spaces such as the interior and the courtyard, learns and internalizes cultural concepts related to privacy, family, and hospitality in a lived, unconscious way. The residents do not simply live in a physical body; they live and enact the fundamental metaphors of their culture every day through everyday actions (such as receiving guests in the courtyard or sitting together in it).

In this way, the house becomes a lived metaphor and a center for the reproduction of culture, where cultural conceptualizations encoded in language are transformed into everyday experience through architecture and reinjected into the value system and mental world of the next generation. This lived experience reinforces cultural cognition and ensures the inextricable link between culture, language, and space, transforming architectural heritage into a living document of an intellectual-linguistic system and a treasury of biological wisdom. In fact, this entire cycle, depicted in the conceptual model (Fig. 10), operationalizes and makes visible the systematic connection between the three known layers of culture: Inner and middle layers (origin of culture): The inner layer (fundamental beliefs and worldviews such as monotheism and the impermanence of the world) and the middle layer (social norms and rules such as privacy, hospitality, and family structure) together constitute the "origin domain" or the mental world in our model. These are the abstract and intangible concepts that provide the main driving force of culture.

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Outer layer (destination and manifestation of culture): The outer layer (material artifacts and behavioral patterns) is the "destination domain," i.e., architecture and its associated actions. Key spaces, decorations, spatial relationships, and residents' daily behaviors are tangible and observable manifestations of those beliefs and norms.

Language plays a vital role as the "path domain" in this process, transforming the inner and middle intangible layers into translatable codes that can be embodied in the outer layer. But more importantly, the reproduction phase, or feedback loop in the model, shows that the outer layer (the experience of living in the house) continuously and actively reproduces and reinforces the middle (norms) and inner (beliefs) layers in the minds of the residents. Therefore, this research does not simply show the existence of a connection between these layers, but rather reveals the mechanism of this two-way connection, and introduces architecture not as the final product of culture but as a living cultural ecosystem in which values are produced, experienced, and reproduced.

Conclusion

This study, aimed at elucidating the relationship between language and architecture within a cultural context, demonstrated that the traditional houses of the Qajar period in Tabriz are the physical embodiment of a coherent worldview and the product of a complex cognitive-cultural process. The findings revealed that this process can be analyzed through the conceptual model: "Mental World (Source) → Language (Path) → Architecture (Destination)." According to this model, the mental world encompasses fundamental beliefs and social norms, which are subsequently translated by the Turkish language and its cultural metaphors into a practical blueprint for architects and residents. Ultimately, architecture materializes these concepts through built elements, decoration, spatial organization, and behavioral patterns, transforming the house into a lived metaphor.

The primary contribution of this research is the presentation of an analytical model that illustrates how intangible heritage (language) manifests as tangible heritage (architecture) through a dynamic cycle. A key aspect of this model is its bidirectional nature. For instance, the cultural metaphor "The guest is divine" leads to the creation of the grand tannabi space for honoring guests; in turn, the lived experience of hosting in this distinguished space reproduces and reinforces this cultural value in the minds and behaviors of subsequent generations. Thus, architecture transcends mere manifestation and becomes an active center for artistic education and continuity.

This study moves beyond purely theoretical or phenomenological approaches by providing an operational model for the empirical analysis of the relationship between language and architecture. By focusing on cognitive processes, it differentiates itself from semiotic studies, which are often limited to formal structures. Furthermore, by employing cultural metaphors to trace the mechanism of translating meaning into form, the study offers a deeper analytical perspective than conventional anthropological approaches, which often rely on general feature mapping.

Given the study's limitation to the Qajar period in Tabriz, it is recommended that this model be applied to the analysis of vernacular architecture in other linguistic-cultural regions of Iran, such as Kurdish-speaking areas (Sanandaj), Persian-speaking regions (Yazd and Isfahan), and Arabic-speaking regions (Khuzestan). Comparative studies of this kind could provide a deeper understanding of the unique role each language plays in shaping architectural form.

While this research focused on residential architecture, investigating the manifestation of cultural metaphors in public and communal spaces, such as bazaars (concepts like chivalry and fairness), mosques (unity and purity), and Persian gardens (paradise and tranquility), could reveal additional dimensions of this relationship. Another critical research avenue is the study of the breakdown of cultural reproduction in contemporary apartment architecture, analyzing how disconnection from local language and worldview has resulted in spaces that contradict residents' behavioral patterns and socio-cultural needs.

This model is not only a tool for analyzing the past but can also serve as a practical guide for contemporary architectural design. Architects and urban designers can, inspired by this process, move beyond simply reproducing traditional forms and instead create spaces rooted in modern society's culture. This approach can be implemented in three stages:

Stage 1: Discover the "Mental World" of Today: Rather than relying on assumptions, the architect uses ethnographic methods (in-depth interviews, participatory workshops) to identify today's values, norms, and psychological needs. Key questions include: "What does the concept of privacy mean in the digital age?" "What is the pattern of hospitality in a modern family?", and "How is the need for solitude and calm defined in a busy urban life?"

Stage 2: Identify Contemporary Linguistic Metaphors: In this stage, the architect listens to the language that users employ to describe their needs. Metaphors and key expressions that capture these needs (e.g., "a cozy corner of my own," "a space to breathe," "a place to gather together") are extracted. These expressions form a cognitive roadmap for design.

Stage 3: Translate into Innovative Architectural Form: In the final stage, instead of copying traditional elements (such as reproducing a decorative orsi window), the architect translates the extracted fundamental principles and concepts into contemporary architectural language, creating innovative forms rooted in today's cultural context.

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• The Relationship between Language and Architecture within Cultural Contex (A Case Study of Azerbaijani Turkish and the Traditional Houses of Tabriz)

Problem Statement: In interdisciplinary studies, the linkage between language as intangible heritage and architecture as tangible heritage represents a critical missing link in revitalizing a connection that modernization processes have risked forgetting. The mechanism that renders linguistic concepts from the mental and linguistic world of a culture into the physical form of architecture has not yet been systematically defined. This study, focusing on Azerbaijan's cultural context, seeks to uncover this mechanism and to present a nationally applicable model.

Research Question: How are the cultural metaphors of the Azerbaijani Turkish language (Tabriz dialect) manifested in the traditional Qajar-era houses of Tabriz?

Purpose: The primary objective of this study is to elucidate the relationship between language and architecture in Iranian culture. By analyzing Turkish-language metaphors and correlating them with the traditional houses of Tabriz, the research proposes a conceptual model with potential application across other cultural contexts in Iran.

Methodology: This research adopts a qualitative case study approach. Data collection employed documentary methods and content analysis of cultural texts (folklore, bayati poems, and dictionaries) to extract linguistic concepts, along with field surveys and architectural map analysis to examine case examples. Final data interpretation combined descriptive, analytical, and interpretive–historical methods to connect abstract concepts with their physical forms.

Findings and Conclusion: The study reveals that traditional Qajar-era houses in Tabriz embody a coherent worldview shaped by a complex cognitive–cultural process. The results confirm that this process can be systematically analyzed through the conceptual model "Mental World (Origin) → Language (Path) → Architecture (Destination)". In this framework, fundamental beliefs and social norms (origin domain) are manifested through the cultural metaphors of Azerbaijani Turkish (path domain) and serve as guiding maps for architects and builders to materialize these concepts in physical elements, decorative details, and spatial relationships. Simultaneously, these concepts act as a semantic and behavioral framework for residents structuring daily behavioral patterns and social interactions within architectural space.

The main achievement of this study is the introduction of an analytical–applied model that demonstrates how intangible heritage (language) transforms into tangible heritage (architecture). A key insight is the identification of a cyclical and dynamic relationship between language and architecture; metaphors such as "The guest is God" have led to the creation of grand, elaborately detailed tambi (central reception halls) in Tabriz houses, while the lived experience of hosting and interaction within these spaces perpetuates and reinforces hospitality values across generations. Thus, architecture moves beyond passive representation to become an active vehicle for cultural transmission.

By transcending purely formal or phenomenological approaches and employing cultural metaphors as an analytical tool, the study offers a deeper perspective than purely anthropological analyses. The presented model provides a basis for testing in other Iranian cultural–linguistic contexts (e.g., Kurdish and Persian) and across diverse building typologies (e.g., bazaars and mosques). This framework holds significant practical implications for developing culturally oriented design guidelines in urban regeneration projects, reinforcing the integration of form, meaning, language, and culture in contemporary Iranian architecture, and fostering the creation of new works rooted in identity and meaning.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict for them in conducting this research.

Footnote

This article is an excerpt from Ms. Parivash Mirzamohammadi's master's thesis in Islamic architecture titled "Explanation of the structural relationship between language and architecture in the context of culture, a case study of the Azeri Turkish language and the architecture of traditional houses in Tabriz city" which was defended in Shahrivar 1403 at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tabriz Islamic Art University. The supervisor was Dr. Parisa Hashempour and the advisor was Dr. Behzad Rahbar.

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