



An Analysis of Conceptual Blending in Selected Verses from Surah Al- Baqarah

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Abstract

This investigation seeks to analyze the effectiveness of Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) Conceptual Blending Theory in interpreting the formation of meaning within chosen verses from Surah Al-Baqarah. The objective of the study is to deduce the intended message by integrating the available cognitive inputs. The results of the investigation indicate that the mechanisms of conceptual blending theory are capable of elucidating the meaning construction within the selected verses

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المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل فعالية نظرية المزج المفاهيمي لفكونر و ترنر (2002) في تفسير تكوين المعنى في بعض الآيات المختارة من سورة البقرة. يهدف البحث إلى استنتاج الرسالة المقصودة من خلال دمج المدخلات المعرفية المتاحة. تشير نتائج التحقيق إلى أن آليات نظرية المزج المفاهيمي قادرة على توضيح بناء المعنى في الآيات المختارة

Introduction

Conceptual blending theory, a cognitive linguistic framework, traces its roots to the late 20th century. It emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional semantic theories, which often struggled to account for the dynamic and creative nature of human language (Fauconnier and Turner (2002).

Historical development was start with Early Influences George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Metaphorical Thinking: Their work in the 1980s highlighted the pervasive role of metaphor in human cognition, laying the groundwork for understanding how conceptual structures can be blended (Fauconnier 2006, Fauconnier& Turner, 2002).

In the Holy Quran, conceptual blending plays an important role in conveying divine messages. The Quran uses a lot of metaphor, allegories, and symbolic narratives that combine spiritual, ethical and historical elements, allowing the readers to infer deep interpretations from the text.

The problem addressed in this study can be reflected by the type of controversy that may exist over the answers to the questions stated below:

- 1.How can conceptual blending help the reader to comprehend verses in holy Qur'an? What mental processes are involved in the process of comprehension?
2. Can conceptual blending explain meaning construction in holy Quran?

The study tries to answer the questions stated above by verifying the hypothesis which states that conceptual blending theory is equipped with the necessary mechanisms that enable viewers analyze and understand selected verses from Holy Qur'an.

1.Defintion and Overview

Conceptual Blending Theory drives from two tradition within cognitive semantics: Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Mental Spaces Theory. Conceptual blending is a unique theory developed to explain phenomena that can't be explained by mental spaces theory or conceptual metaphor theory. Furthermore, blending theory posses considerable theoretical complexity of its own. A key insight of blending theory is that the construction of meaning typically involves the integration of structures that yield something more than the sum of its parts. Blending theorists argue that this process of integrating or mixing concepts is a general and fundamental cognitive process that is central to how we think. (Evans & Green, 2006: 400)

Curse (2006: 21) states that conceptual blending theory is the processes of integrating meaning (concepts) in the understanding of complicated verbal utterances. Blending theory employs the concept of mental spaces. The blending process involves four mental areas, two of these represent input spaces, blended and generic. Input spaces reflect relevant components of the ideas being merged, while blended spaces display the result of the blending process. Generic spaces represent shared conceptual material between the two concepts. For example (That surgeon is a butcher), this example is metaphor which suggests that the surgeon is incompetent, but this is not a traditional characteristics of either surgeon or butcher, and is therefore a new characteristics. When interpreting " the surgeon is a butcher" we extract relevant features from both the term "surgeon" and " butcher" and

elaborate on them based on our knowledge of the world to create a 'mixed'. We conclude that the butcher- surgeon is incompetent because we know he happily wields his instruments in the operating room with the delicacy and control of a butcher handling a carcass, and cares for his patients as much as a butcher does his meat.

Literature Review

Malek et al. (2021) studied the efficiency of Conceptual blending theory in analyzing meaning construction in political caricatures and investigating the viewer's inference of the intended message. The samples are selected caricatures from three American newspapers: Newsday, Pittsburg Post-Gazette, and USA Today, and three of them about the Democratic candidate Joe Biden. The study concluded that blending in political caricatures is image-based rather than text-based.

Joy et al. (2008) aim to inspect the blending processes consumers use to perceive ads. They state that conceptual blending happens at the moment of perception and new meanings are constructed. The data was gathered in phenomenological interviews. The study showed that metaphor and blending share subtle similarities and differences.

Jianghua (2019) used conceptual blending to explore the emotional poetic metaphors related to flowers in A Dream of Red Mansions. He concluded that the conceptual blending process enabled the poet to project the flower onto human beings. To ease comprehension a flower was used to metaphorize human beings thus making abstract things more concrete and eccentric things familiar.

Eun Jung (2017) applied two cognitive analytic tools, Mental Space Theory, and Conceptual Blending Theory, in analyzing literary texts and relating cognitive approaches to literary studies. The study analyzed the images of the character Maria in Clay from Dubliners by James Joyce. The different images of Maria, the main character, are portrayed by emergent structure in the blended space. A better story comprehension is achieved by projecting from blended space into input spaces and thus readers won't be deceived by the narrative.

Emergent Structure

Three operations during blend construction create the emergent structure: these operations are composition, completion and elaboration. Composition entails assigning a connection from one space to an element or components of the other input spaces. (Coulson & Oakley, 2000: 180)

Completion requires thorough understanding of the blend's components. It completes the blend's structure by including various structures and scenarios derived from everyday experience. Elaboration enhances the blend by imaginative mental simulation in line with the newly established logic and rules that evolved throughout the composition and completion of the blend. The elaboration of the blend may be performed indefinitely, as mental simulation is performed by imaginative use all materials and logic within the blend. Adding a new concepts or inferences to a blend leads to further elaboration. All of these operations result in the formation of an emergent structure in the overall integration network (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002: 48-49)

Cross- space Mapping

According to Turner and Fauconnier (2014: 23) conceptual blend is determined by the creation or a position of a mapping between counterparts in distinct spaces. First, these spaces might be constructed from separate conceptual domain or the same domain. Second the mapping between the spaces can be categorical, analogical or metaphoric, or connect generic roles or values through identity connectors.

Typical conceptual integration network

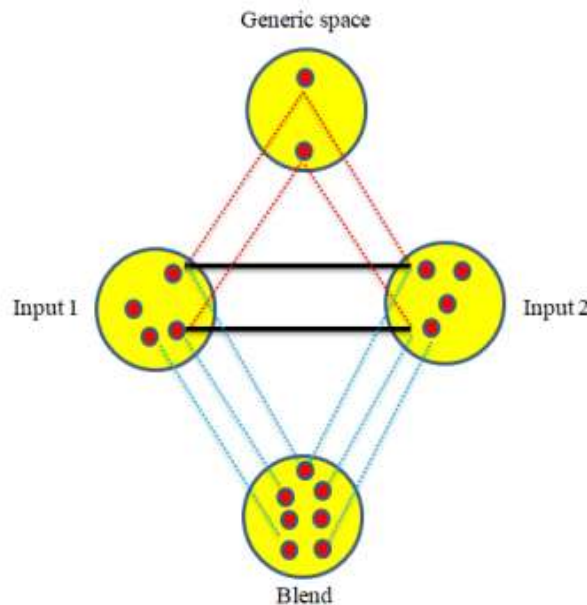
Conceptual blending theory is scientifically described and studied under the terms of integration networks. Conceptual blending consists of four interrelated mental spaces: two matched input spaces, a generic space formed by a structure common to the inputs, and the blended space. The blended space is constructed by selective selective projection from the inputs, pattern completion and dynamic elaboration (Fauconnier and Turner, 2003:60).

Conceptual Blending and Religion

Blending has crucial propositions for the development of Culture and religion. Turner (2014,p.121) states that blending extends readers' minds with vast mental webs of profound meaning that range over space, time, causality, and agency. Quranic verses are filled with complex blends that expand time, space, and change. Metaphors and conceptual blending are essential for human experiences of religion.

The Adopted Model

In this research Fauconnier and Turner`s (2002) conceptual blending theory uses to analyse the verses under study. This modal is chosen for its ability to explain how meaning is constructed in certain verses. This also demonstrates how the reader interprets the intended meaning by combining several inputs. The adopted model`s primary parts are shown in the figure below:



Method of Analysis

In analyzing the selected verses, the method focuses on how different mental areas are combined to develop new meanings. Analysts first identify the input spaces, which reflect many concepts or scenarios given in the verses. These inputs areas then mapped onto one another, frequently using similar or related parts to create a blended space in which elements from both inputs interact in new ways. By evaluating the emergent structure of this blend, including any new inferences, analysts might identify deeper symbolic meanings or thematic connections within the text. The technique demonstrates how different concepts are integrated to provide multifaceted interpretations that go beyond literal readings of the verses.

1. Analysis of Verse No. 1

(وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ) البقرة (93)

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And their hearts absorbed (the worship of) the calf because of their disbelief.

Conceptual blending blends two different ideas to give as a rough example and this example ensures the understanding of this situation. What is meant in this verse is that Allah Almighty wants to give us the complete picture of the materialism of Israel in that, they drank the calf itself, that is, the calf entered their hearts. It is as if the calf's love is a sweet, delicious drink whose sweetness mixes with the intestines and circulates through them as the drink circulates through the bodies. Allah Almighty wants to draw our attention to the word drink because it is a description of drinking water and water penetrates all parts of the body. The picture expresses the penetration of materialism into the heart of Israel, disbelief enters their hearts as is the water. They disbelieved at first, and because of their disbelief, the calf entered their hearts and sealed them.

2. Analysis of Verse No.2

(صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً ۗ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ) البقرة (138)

The sibghah of Allah and which Sibghah can be better than Allah's ? And we are His worshippers.

His Almighty saying: (The sibghah of Allah). It is as if faith in Allah, the faith of Abraham, and what Allah revealed to His messengers are the divine tincture that penetrates the human body. So why the word sibghah (tincture)? What we know that faith permeates your entire body. It isn't a dye from outside your body, but rather a dye that Allah placed in the cells of the heart present in it at the time of creation. It is as if faith is a dye that exists by nature. It is the dye of Allah. Because faith and religion don't come from outside the person but rather come from within him, therefore, faith shakes all the organs of the human body. Almighty saying: (and which Sibghah can be better than Allah's?) is a question that they can't deny, but the answer comes according to what the questioner, Glory to be him wants, namely that there is no one is better in character than Allah. This is the influence that Allah places on hearts. It is an internal matter not external. Allah Almighty says(And we are His worshippers) meaning we are obedient to His commands, and the worshiper is one who obeys Allah's commands and avoid what he has forbidden. Dye in language is a color to something so that it changes it with another color. The metaphor here is the word dye used in the Holy Qur'an to refer to religion and faith, where its feature appears on the believer just as the effect of dye appears on the clothes.

3. Analysis of Verse No.3

(أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ) البقرة (16)

Allah the Almighty describe the hypocrites as those who bought misguidance in exchange for guidance. As long as there is a purchase, there is a deal that requires a buyer and seller. These hypocrites bought misguidance, and they bought it at what price?! They bought it in exchange for guidance. Allah the Almighty say: (So their trade brought no profit, nor were they guided.) Trade is buying and selling. The buyer is a consumer, and the seller may be a producer, or an intermediary between the producer and the consumer. In this verse, it indicates that they lose everything because they did not profit, as if they did not achieve anything of benefit, and they lost the guidance, meaning they lost profit and capital. Their trade did not bring profit. Perhaps they did not gain or lose, but they offered guidance in exchange for misguidance, so they didn't gain their guidance, meaning their capital, was lost. In the word " they bought" there is a clear metaphor meaning they chose, and something was mentioned with it that is appropriate to the simile, and this thing is " their trade did not profit them".

Discussion of Results

The result of analysing the selected verses are presented in the form of answers to the research question raised in the introduction.

1. How can conceptual blending help the reader to comprehend verses in holy Qur'an? What mental processes are involved in the process of comprehension?

Through the analyzing the selected data, it was discovered that conceptual blending theory can help the reader to understand the verses in Holy Qur'an and the intended meaning by recognizing the element of each input space aside, and then infer the element shared by these inputs with additional knowledge with religion

2. Can conceptual blending explain meaning construction in holy Quran?

To answer this point, one may claim that conceptual blending includes proper methods for understanding verses in the Holy Quran. The inputs help in recognizing the source and target ideas. Mapping across various inputs help in recognizing the common elements represented in the source and the target concepts. The three spaces help the reader in concluding the intended message conveyed in the blended spaces.

Conclusion

1. Conceptual blending provides a useful framework for understanding the cognitive and linguistic processes that underpin the Qur'an's rhetorical strength and capacity to express important truths in an inspirational manner.

2. The Holy Qur'an uses conceptual blending theory to convey its moral lessons.

3. In the context of the Holy Qur'an, conceptual blending can be viewed as a technique for comprehending how numerous abstract and concert notions are mixed to communicate sophisticated and moral thoughts.

4. Conceptual blending has distinct characteristics and abiding relevance in the Holy Qur'an.

5. Blending in Holy Quran is mainly text-based not image-based.

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