A Cognitive Semantic Study of Metaphoricity in Arabic Advertisements

Mustafa Abdulsahib Abdulkareem

College of Education for Women /University of Kufa

mustafaa.alhassan@uokufa.edu.iq

Abstract

The role of metaphor in our language is huge. It plays a very important role, not only in literature, but also in education, media, and in our daily interaction. Metaphors are frequently used in advertising as a way to enhance the perceived value of a product or to make it seem more personal because they can create a specific brand image by combining a verbal phrase with a visual image to dramatize the effect. The present study is an attempt to analyze metaphor of Arabic advertisements from the standpoint of conceptual blending theory. The study assumes that such model is suitable to analyze advertisements due to the fact that such idiomatic expressions employed in these kinds of adverts can be explained in terms of conceptual blending theory. Under investigation, five metaphoric adverts were selected from Arabic media in order to be analyzed. The results have showed that previous theories of metaphor, like Interaction Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, cannot totally interpret metaphoric advertisements. The study also assumes that different networks can be used in examining metaphoric advertisements. Conceptual blending theory is the best one that can provide a more complete clarification for metaphoric advertisements.

Keywords: advertisements, metaphor, conceptual metaphor, conceptual blending, integration network, mental space.

دراسة دلالية معرفية للاستعارة في الإعلانات العربية

مصطفى عبد الصاحب عبدالكريم

كلية التربية للبنات/ جامعة الكوفة

المستخلص

للاستعارة أهمية كبيرة في لغة الإنسان، ولا تقتصر أهمية وظيفتها على النص الأدبي فقط، ولكن أيضًا في مجالات التعليم والإعلام وكل تواصلاتنا اليومية. تُستخدم الاستعارات بشكل متكرر في الإعلانات وسيلة لتعزيز القيمة المُتصوَّرة للمنتج أو لجعله يبدو أكثر شخصية، حيث يمكنها إنشاء صورة علامة تجارية محددة بالجمع بين عبارة لفظية وصورة مرئية لإضفاء تأثير درامي. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الاستعارة في الإعلانات العربية من منظور نظرية المزج المفاهيمي. وتفترض الدراسة أن هذا النموذج مناسب لتحليل الإعلانات؛ لأن العبارات الاصطلاحية المستخدمة في هذا النوع من الإعلانات يمكن تفسيرها عبر نظرية المزج المفاهيمي، باختيار خمسة إعلانات مجازية من وسائل الإعلام العربية لتحليلها. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن النظريات السابقة للاستعارة، مثل نظرية التفاعل ونظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية، لا يمكنها تفسير الإعلانات المجازية بشكل كامل. وتفترض الدراسة أن شبكات مختلفة يمكن استخدامها لفحص الإعلانات المجازية، وأن نظرية المزج المفاهيمي هي الأفضل لتقديم تفسير أكثر شمولًا لهذه الإعلانات.

الكلمات الدالة: الإعلانات، الاستعارة، الاستعارة المفاهيمية، المزج المفاهيمي، شبكة التكامل، الفضاء الذهني.

1. Introduction

The present work is framed within the area of cognitive linguistics which studies the connection between human language and mind in relation to our physical world [1]. That is, cognitive linguistics aims to examine how linguistic knowledge is connected to world knowledge (conceptualization). There are different cognitive theories that tend to study this relationship. Some of these theories are related to the study of metaphor as one of the biggest challenges cognitive linguistics has faced.

Metaphors are frequently used in advertising as a way to enhance the perceived value of a product or to make it seem more personal because they can create a specific brand image by combining a verbal phrase with a visual image to dramatize the effect. Therefore, metaphors are considered as one of the best ways in making advertising, in which advertisers used them as a tool to persuade customers into buying the products advertised. The aim of this study is to draw attention to the ways the advertisers use and manipulate people's thinking by applying a specific type of figure speech, namely metaphor in advertisements.

Advertisement and the non-linguistic content of the advertising message, such as metaphor, have over the years received the attention of many scientists from a wide range of disciplines. From a cognitive perspective, Forceville's book, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising* [2], is the first book that studies metaphor in advertising, although his theory of metaphor is largely based on Black's interaction theory. He claims that metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon rather than a linguistic one. His aim is mainly to develop a theory of pictorial metaphor. He points out that Black's notion of metaphor is related to that of Lakoff and Johnson [3].

Another study of CM in advertising is given by Dabrowski [4]. This study examines advertisements from four different magazines, and results in the identification of four groups of what is labelled model metaphors. These four groups are abstract in concrete, inanimate is animate, metaphors based on the experience or senses, and familiar to describe less familiar [4].

Lundmark [5] has analyzed metaphor in British magazine advertising. She adopts both CBT and CMT. Lundmark [5]supposes that the metaphorical expressions in advertisements often depend on puns and ambiguities. The basic conventional metaphor is also revitalized and exploited in order to construct an argument about the product. Creativity in advertising usually involves reimagining the product. This is accomplished by creating novel metaphor to conceptualize the product. However, such novel metaphors still depend on conventional metaphors in its construction and interpretation. After analyzing the data, Lundmark arrives at conclusion both CBT and CMT "are the best available analytical tools for describing the complex creative processes that take place in these ads" [5].

Joy et al.[6] are among the researchers who have utilized the CBT as a framework to study metaphoric advertising. Their work highlights both the similarities and distinctions between metaphor and blending, while exploring their presence in three types of blending networks: simplex, mirror, and double-scope networks within the context of advertising.

Moreover, Abusaeedi et al. [7] explore the use of metaphor in certain Iranian family journals through the lens of CBT. They argue that earlier metaphor theories, such as Interaction Theory and CMT, fall short in fully explaining metaphoric advertisements. Instead, they assert that CBT is the most suitable theory for offering a more comprehensive understanding of such advertisements.

As this study concentrates on analyzing Arabic metaphors in advertisements through the lens of CBT, it is essential to first explore and discuss the role of metaphor in advertising. Following that, an overview of CBT as an analytical framework, along with the methods of data collection and analysis, will be provided.

2. Metaphors in Advertisements

The nature of metaphor has been studied for quite a long time from different perspectives. The notion of metaphor is traced back to 2,000 years ago when it was studied within the discipline called *rhetoric* in ancient Greece [7]. Metaphor is viewed as part of figurative language that is used primarily in literature through which linguistic item is transferred from one object to another [6]. In other words, it is simply a matter of clarifying one thing in terms of something else [9].

However, the contemporary view of metaphors considers metaphor as the part of normal speech and cognition. By publishing their book, 'Metaphors We Live By' [3], George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have established a new area within cognitive linguistics. In contrast with the traditional understanding of metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Theory (later known as Contemporary Theory of metaphor, Lakoff [10] provided a convincing argument for the centrality of metaphor to everyday language and thought [11]. Considering human conceptual system as metaphorically structured, Lakoff and Johnson [3] sate that metaphor is essentially conceptual in nature which is "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action". People can speak as well as think by utilizing metaphorical terms. Kövecses [12], a prominent Hungarian scholar in the field of metaphors, defines metaphor from a cognitive perspective as the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another. The domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn is referred to as the *source domain*, while the domain being understood is called the *target domain*. This process involves a series of established correspondences between the source and target domains. These correspondences are technically referred to as mappings. However, Croft and Cruse [13] claim that such metaphors are not linguistic in nature despite of they are naturally realized linguistically. Lakoff [14] confirms that "the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another". This means that metaphors are a primary means of conceptualizing the world.

Metaphors are prevalent in everyday life, appearing in newspapers, conversations, books, movies, and more. The media plays a significant role in this process by offering readers and viewers alternative metaphorical frameworks [15].Such metaphorical constructions, within the field of media, are mainly manifested in advertisements. As Kövecses[12] notes that "a major manifestation of conceptual metaphors are advertisements." These cognitive mechanisms depend not only on our previous knowledge and experience, but also on our culture. Typologically, advertising means

'taking note'. Later, its meaning changed to mean 'persuading'. The term advertisement is derived from the French word 'avertissement', from stem of 'averter' which means "public notice" [15]. According to Zhang and Gao [16], advertising is as a form of communication that conveys effective information about products or services between the advertisers (addresser) and the audience (addressee), include both verbal and non-verbal ways of communication. Advertisers use metaphor as a form of persuasion in making advertising. That is, advertisers use metaphors as a tool for the purpose of persuading the audience into buying the products advertised. It may be a single metaphor for a hundred words of advertising text. In advertising, a metaphor typically establishes a comparison between the product and a specific quality the advertiser wants to associate with it.

From cognitive view, metaphor is studied with two related theories: conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual blending theory. These theories are largely complementary and each one has its own task, but with various emphasis and foci [17]. Both theories have an aim of creating new meaning and showing how mind works. Although CMT depends on two domains: source and target, there is no emergent structure. This emergent structure is one of the phenomena CBT tries to explain which CMT cannot account for [8]. Although CMT provides information about the way people think, CBT goes further by creating temporary and dynamic mental spaces (henceforth MSs) and construct meaning within them. Therefore, we can see CMT is complementary to CBT. For this reason, this study relies on CBT theory that is affiliated within Cognitive semantics as a model of analysis.

3. Conceptual Blending Theory

Blending theory has been originally proposed by Fauconnier and Turner [18] to create new meaning, and then developed through many articles (Fauconnier and Tumer [19], [20], [21], [22] etc., Tumer and Faucormier [23], [24], [25]). A newer version of CB theory, with somewhat different terminology, was presented in Turner and Fauconnier and Turner's [26] book, *The Way We Think*. Fauconnier and Turner present this theory to explain how mind works. Turner [27] emphasizes that CB theory has existed for millions of years:

> The basic mental operation of conceptual integration […],has been presented and evolving in various species for a long time, probably since early mammals, and there is no reason to doubt that many mammalian species aside from human being, have the ability to execute rudimentary forms of conceptual integration.

Fauconnier and Turner [26] describe CB "as a dynamic process that occurs at the moment of perception to create new meanings from existing ways of thinking" [6]. Evans and Green [8] add that CBT is "that meaning construction typically involves integration of structure that gives rise to more than the sum of its parts". This means that *CBT* is cognitive operations and processes that combine and *blend* words, images, and thoughts in a network of MSs to create and represent meaning. It gives us the ways to dynamically create and understand the world around us.

CBT is also influenced by and developed from different theories: *Mental Space Theory (*henceforth *MST),* CMT, and other cognitive theories. Therefore, Murphy and

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Koskela [28] refer to this relation with other theories saying that BT can be seen as a development of *MST*, and it is also influenced by *CMT*. However, CBT differs from *CMT* in that the former focuses specifically on the dynamic construction of meaning. The basic notion of CBT is to blend or integrate of MSs. Thus, CBT developed from *MST*.

3.1. Mental Space Theory

It is a cognitive theory suggested by Fauconnier [18]. It is regarded as one of the basic components of frames. Fauconnier and Turner [26] define MS as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action". of the mental space approach. *They [26] explain that MSs are composed of elements typically organized within frames. Various spaces within a single frame hold distinct information about these elements, which often have counterparts in other MSs [29]. Evans and Green [8] suggest that MST is closely connected to Blending Theory in terms of its structure and core concepts, describing it as an extension of the mental space framework.*

Coulson and Oakley [30] describe this relationship between CBT and MST as follows: "Blending theory describes a set of principles for combining dynamic cognitive models in a network of *mental spaces*". *Within BT,* MSs are connected with the set of correspondences that are referred to as mapping to build conceptual integration network.

3.2. The Network Model of Conceptual Integration

Human beings go beyond imagining stories that contradict the current story. They can also relate different stories, or in general, between different and conflicting mental places [31].Conceptual integration network is the process of connecting MSs. Fauconnier and Turner [26] refer to this process as a "matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backward to the inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself". Integration networks in CBT are not simply two spaces entities, they are multiple spaces entities. Therefore, the process of forming the networks is by linking two or more input spaces [8]; this process is known as 'mapping'.

Furthermore, conceptual network consists of four MSs: generic space, two input spaces and mapping these spaces forms blended space [1]. Hart[32]argues that metaphorical utterances include spaces which involve elements from two different scenarios with different background frames or assumptions in the sense that a space is created for each scenario. The two spaces, input space 1 and input space 2, are linked by counterpart connections between their elements, which are represented with solid lines in the notation.

In addition to the two input spaces there is another MS which called 'generic space'. This space contains abstract elements that are common to both input spaces. Integration networks also contain another MS called 'blended space' (henceforth BS). This space takes elements from both input spaces by the process of mapping to derive an integrated conceptualization [28]. However, BS is not depended only on input spaces, but it is "characterized by new emergent conceptual structure in its own right, whose set-up differs from those of the two input spaces" [33]. In BS, we can expect to find novel information that is not presented in any other space of the network.

The process of mapping these four MSs depends on three operations. The first operation is 'composition' of elements on the input spaces and combining them in BS. Second operation is 'completion' which brings additional structures to the BS, and the third operation is 'elaboration' which is the running of the blend [22]. These three operations lead to emergent structure in the blend.

Fauconnier and Turner [26] identify four types of integration networks: simplex networks, mirror networks, single-scope networks, and double-scope networks. In simplex networks, there are two input spaces—one containing the frame with roles and the other corresponding to the values. Mirror networks involve a shared common frame across all spaces, including the BS. In single-scope networks, the input spaces have different frames, but only one structures the BS. Similarly, double-scope networks also feature input spaces with distinct frames [8].

Like many other cognitive processes, CBT can be utilized in many other non-linguistic fields of human activity. These involve rituals, art or tool manufacture. Thus, CBT is not only important to explain the role of language in meaning construction, it is considered to be a "fundamental cognitive operation that is central to the general properties of human thought and imagination" [8].

4. Research Material and Method

In order to carry out the analysis of the different metaphors, the present study examined various kinds of advertisements. The selection of advertisements was based on the content of metaphor to determine which types of metaphor might be useful for this qualitative analysis. After filtering those advertisements, the author picked out five Arabic metaphoric advertisements to be analyzed, namely:
1. Almarai _ Obesity is a killer monster
2. Raid…the creeping insecticide: ready for battle
3. Coca Cola _ taste of the moment
4. Al-Emlaq Super Gel
5. Cold your summer with 7 up

All these advertisements have been entirely retrieved from the web sources, especially YouTube as a primary source, and social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Moreover, the mentioned advertisements are translated from Arabic into English to be analyzed. To avoid subjectivity, they are displayed in the appendix in both languages with a picture belonging to the respective advertisements. The selected advertisements are analyzed qualitatively using CBT to find out where the metaphors are placed.

5. Data Description and Analysis
5.1. Almarai _ Obesity is a killer monster

The first advertisement is for Almarai cheese. It is obvious that cheese causes obesity. The advertiser tries to market his merchandise by resembling the obesity to monster metaphorically. They link the obesity to monster because the latter causes die and obesity causes diseases, and therefore, both are harmful. By integrating these two

things, the advertiser attempts to show that Almarai cheese was fat-free. In Figure (1), one can find a possible elaboration of this BS:
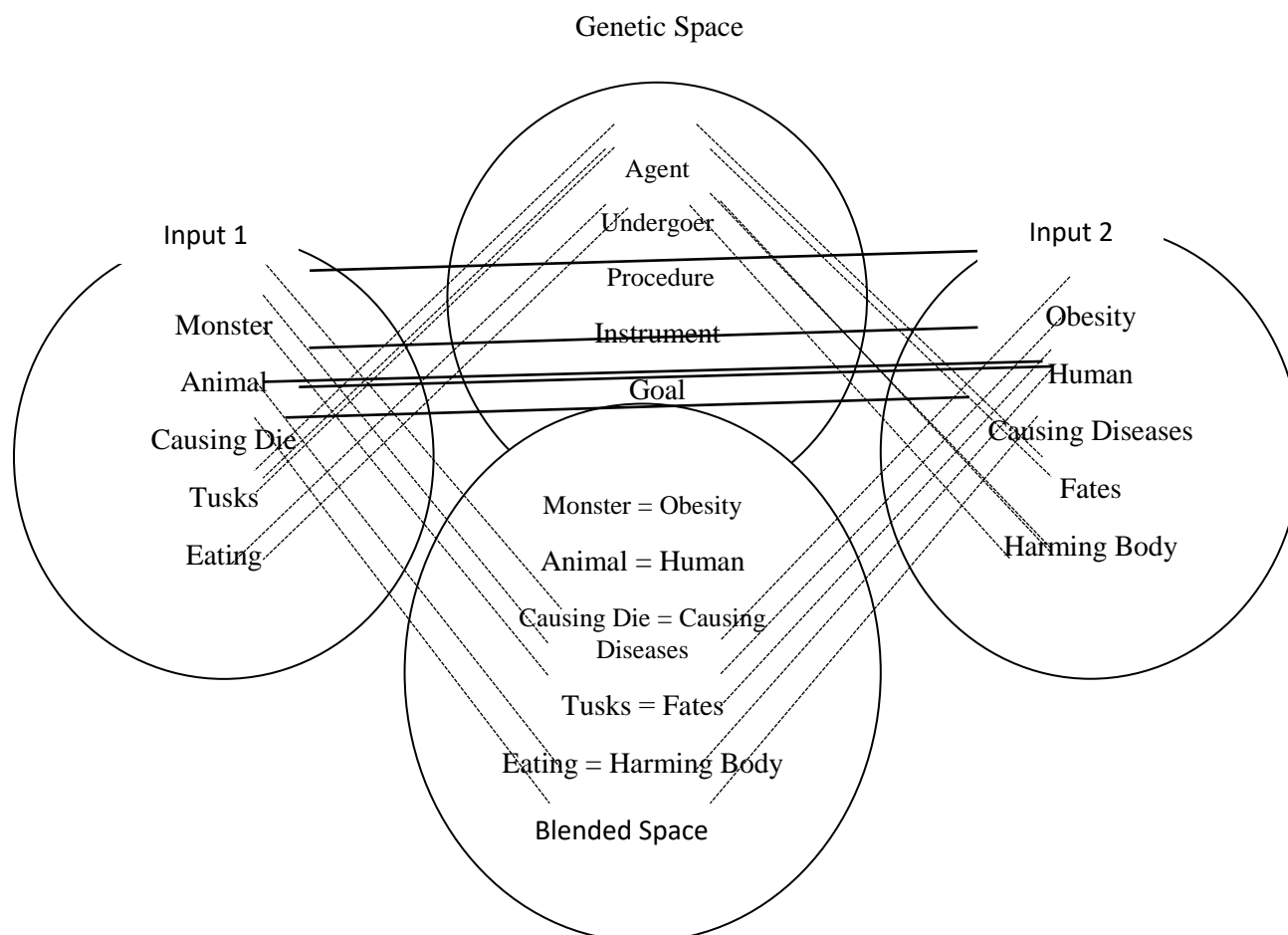

Fig.1. The conceptual integration network for obesity and monster advertisement.

With the help of the generic space, it is possible to map between corresponding elements of both inputs. However, what is important here is that after the BS is discovered, we add new information which is absent in both inputs. In this case it is the message that obesity leads to killing. When you get Almarai, you will eliminate obesity. In integration network we have two input spaces: first of them includes elements like obesity, human, diseases, fates, and harming body. The other input consists of monster, animal, die, tusks, and eating. These elements are mapped to form blended MS.

5.2. Raid - the creeping insecticide: ready for battle

An advert for Raid - the creeping insecticide includes our second advertisements for discussion. Raid is the brand name of a line of insecticide products. The word battle is metaphorically used to refer to Raid. That is, Raid is analogized to battle in the sense that Raid can be used as a gun to kill insects which are represented as an enemy. To understand this relationship, an integration network is created, as in Figures (2).
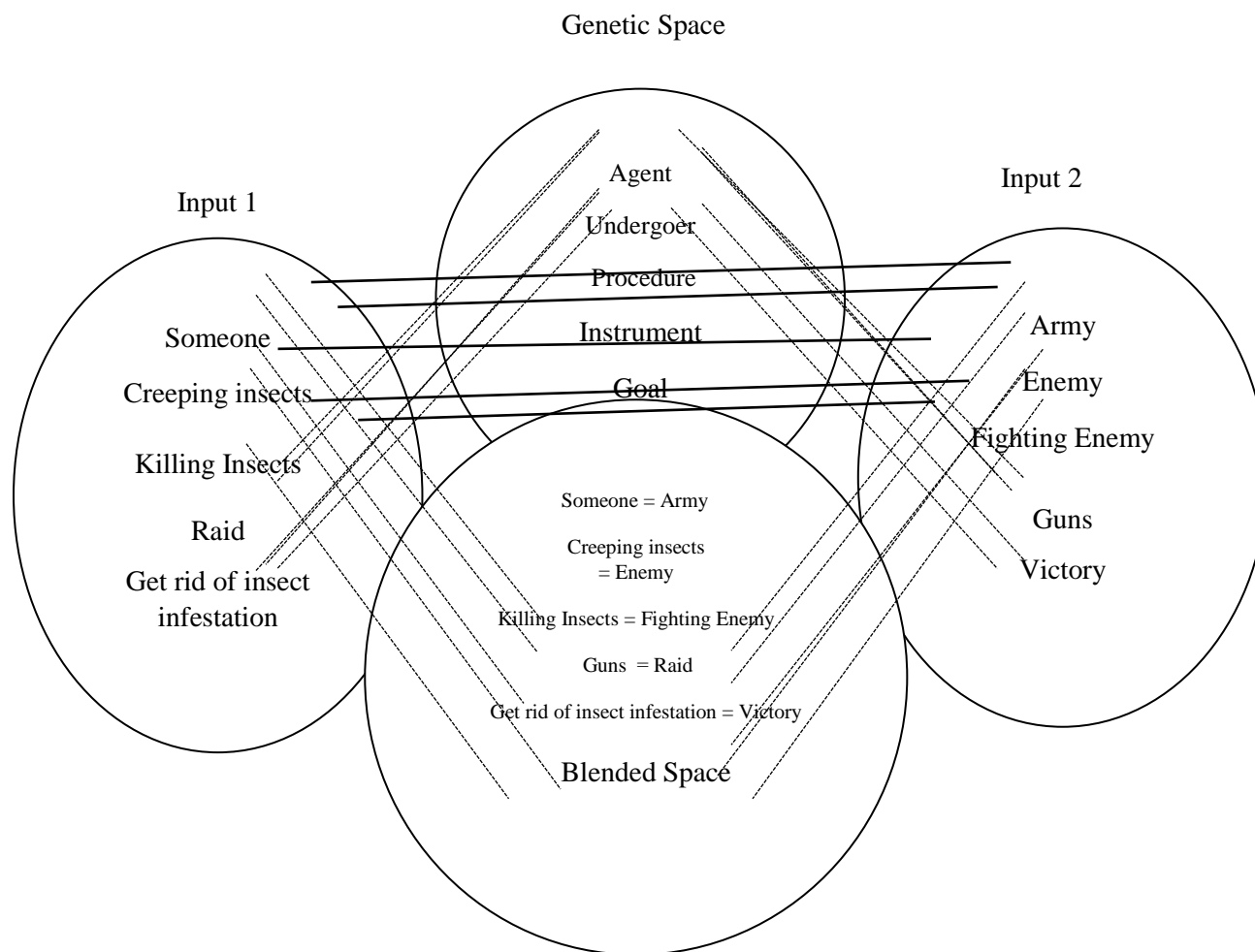
Genetic Space

Fig.2. The conceptual integration network for Raid and battle advertisement.

It is obvious that there are also two inputs that consist of corresponding elements. Generic space includes more general terms which make it possible to combine the two inputs. In this case, the process of mapping gives rise to the appearance of BS which provides us new information. The BS may contain information that is not found in both input spaces. Within this analogy, input[1] represents information about Raid such as creeping insects, killing Insects, and get rid of insect infestation. These elements are mapped conceptually to the elements that are found in input 2 which is related to battle analogy, and involving elements of army, enemy, fighting enemy, guns, and victory. Therefore, Raid is resembled as a fighter and insecticide as a gun to kill insects. Since battle leads us to victory, the result of using Raid is to get rid of insect infestation. In this case, the elements in both inputs are mapped to form the BS which provides an innovative conceptualization.

5.3 Coca Cola - taste of the moment

The next advert is for 'Coca Cola _ taste of the moment'. This kind of metaphor is very difficult to be analyzed because it carries invisible metaphor. The process of tasting

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in our example refers metaphorically to Coca Cola. It is represented by time which is 'the moment'. This type of metaphor, according to Fauconnier, is known as simplex networks. These networks have two input spaces, one with the frame containing the roles, and the other relates to the values. Fauconnier introduces the notion of roles and values to deal with ambiguities. For instance, the sentence "The president changes every seven years" can be interpreted in two ways: it could mean that the individual holding the position undergoes personal changes, such as getting a new haircut, or that the person serving as president is replaced by someone else. The first interpretation refers to the value, focusing on the individual, while the second pertains to the role, emphasizing the position. Roles and values allow for different mapping possibilities [8]. Concerning our example, 'Coca Cola _ taste of the moment', it represents this ambiguity. The best way to decode this ambiguity is by representing it in a schematic way, as showing in Figure (3).

The elements of the first input are projected with those in the second input to form BS. In the present advert, two senses of the word 'moment' are involved here, i.e., the literal sense is time, and the metaphorical sense is Coca Cola. The metaphorical sense behind this representation is 'abstract is concrete'. In other words, the abstract object which is described as 'moment' is physically interpreted by concrete object, Coca Cola.
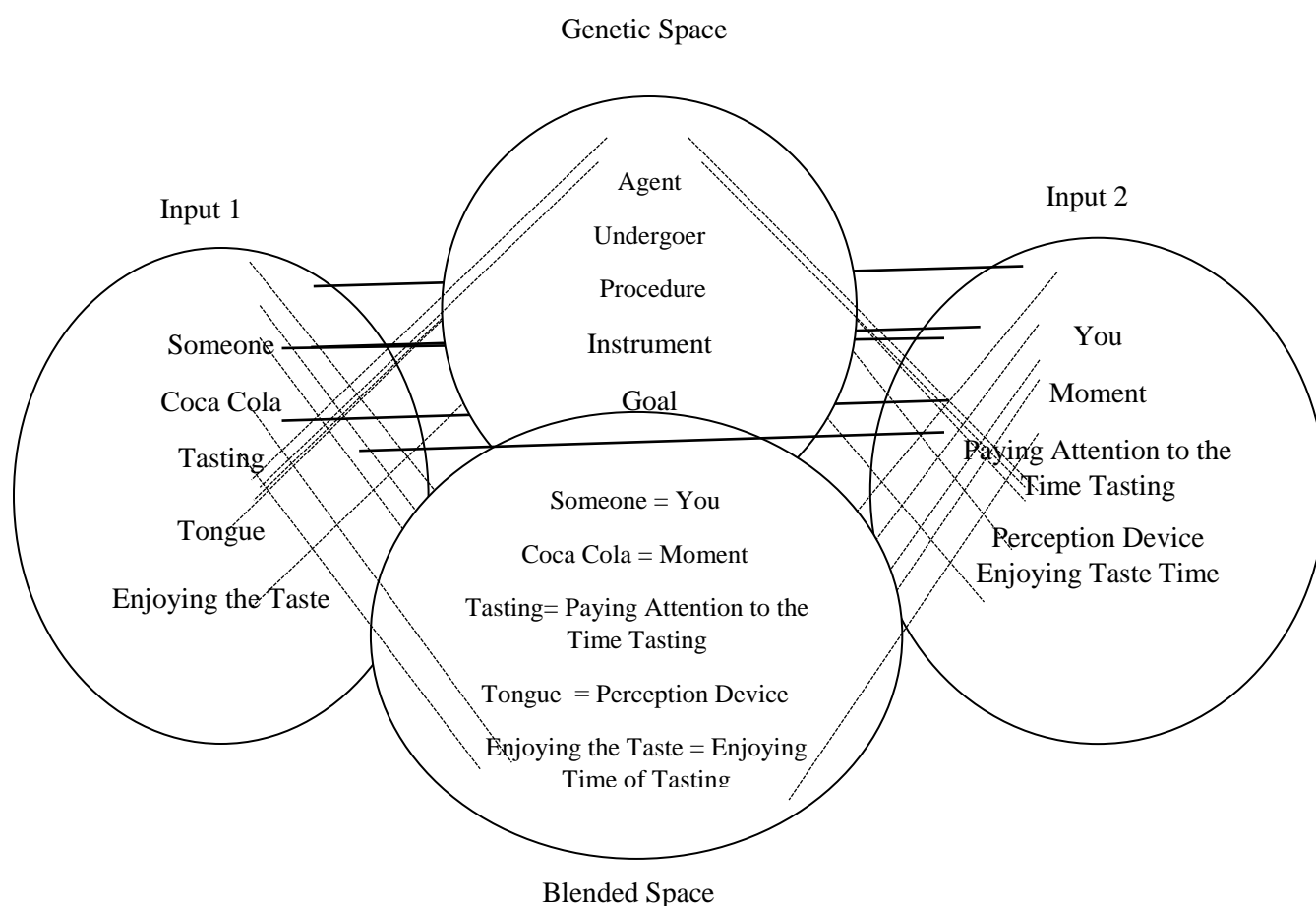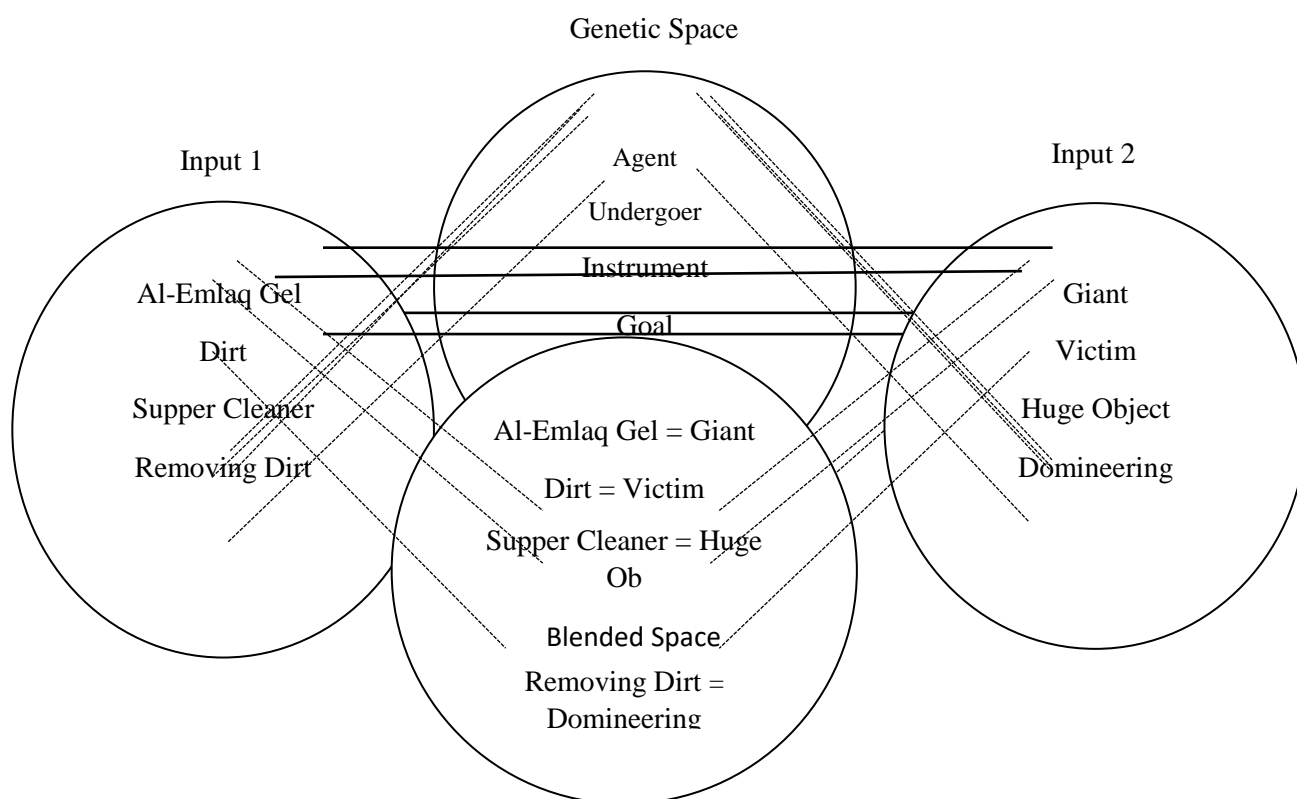
Fig.3. The conceptual integration network for taste of the moment advertisement

5.4 Al-Emlaq Super Gel

An advert for Al-Emlaq cleaner, constitute the third example involved in the present study. The advertisement forms a single scope network. Fauconnier and Turner [26] refer to this kind of network as the one that has two input spaces with distinct frames, one of them is mapped to organize the BS. The organizing of the BS is an extension of the organizing frame of one of the inputs but not the other. The input that provides such organizing frame to the BS is often called the 'source', whereas the other input that is the focus of understanding is often called the 'target'.

Concerning this example, Al-Emlaq represents a single scope network. It is a gel used to remove dirt. Therefore, the word 'Al-Emlaq', in Arabic, means giant or huge object. The advertisers, here, attempt to depict this cleaner as super powerful gel. This gel is compared to something great which is a giant. In this single scope network, as shown in Figure (4), input space[1] includes Al-Emlaq gel analogy and the input space[2] involves giant.

Fig.4. The conceptual integration network for Al-Emlaq Super Gel advertisement

The metaphor works by mapping the structure of the conventional input space (Al-Emlaq) onto the emergent input space (Giant). The source input, which supplies the organizing frame for the blend and serves as the framing input, is the Al-Emlaq gel input. The target input, which is the primary focus of understanding, is the giant input. The

input 1 shows the elements of Al-Emlaq gel, including dirt, supper cleaner, and removing dirt. These elements are analogized to that in input 2 that represents information about the giant (with the meaning of huge body), victim, huge object, and domineering. The elements of both inputs are connected to form the BS. The BS, with the help of generic space, has common features from the two input spaces, relating to both Al-Emlaq and gel. Thus, in the BS, we comprehend Al-Emlaq gel as supper cleaner.

5.5 Cold your summer with 7 up

The advert for 7 up, which is a brand of lemon-lime-flavored non-caffeinated soft drink, constitutes our last example. There is a hidden analogy within this advertisement. There is an intimate relationship between the heat of summer and 7 up which is supposed to be cool. The summer, here, is metaphorically used to refer to someone who refreshes his body by drinking 7 up which is certainly cold. This analogy can be represented in the following schema:
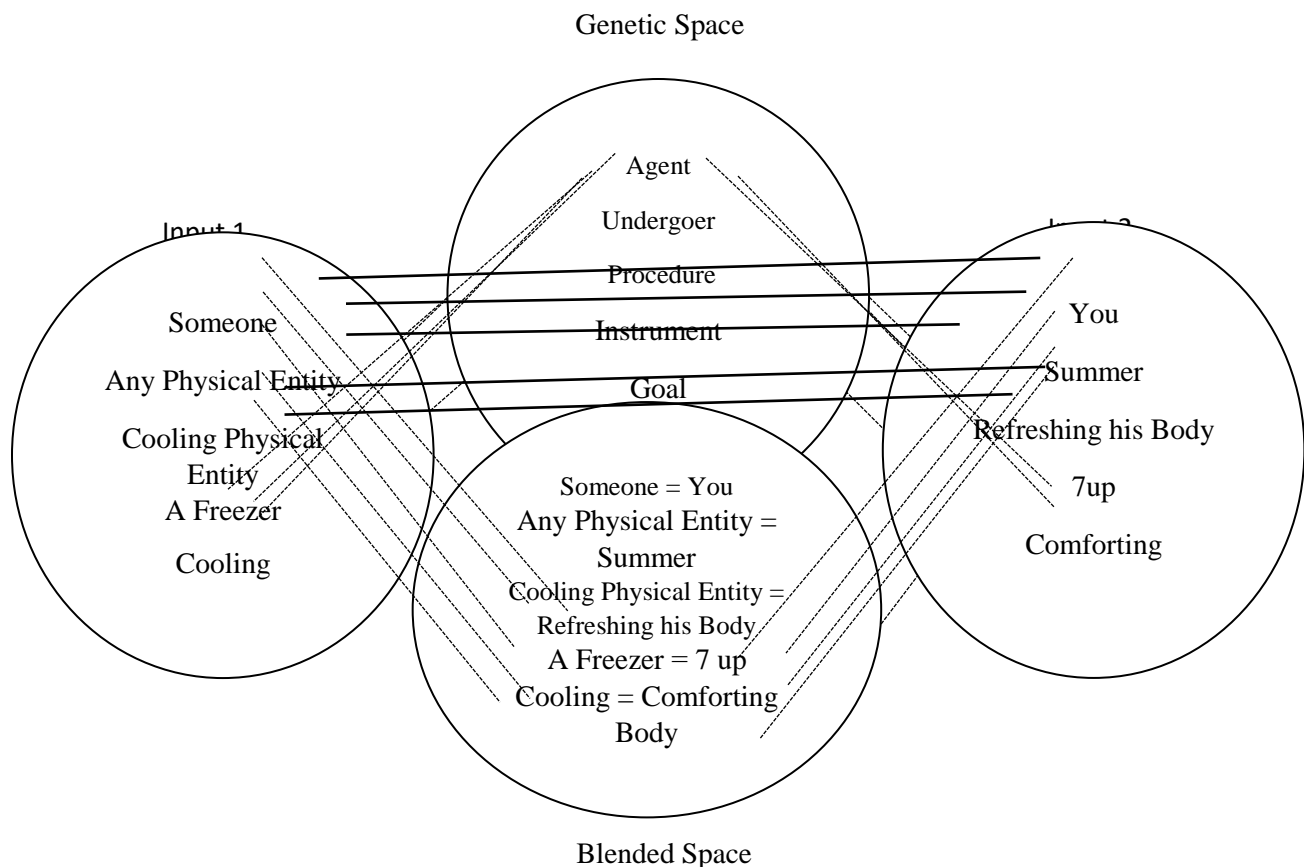

Fig.5. The conceptual integration network for Cold your summer with 7 up

Taking a closer look at the details of this mapping, the first input corresponds to the source of the conventional metaphor, which refers to any physical entity (someone), while the second input corresponds to the target that refers to the person who drinks 7 up. The result is the BS which gathers these elements from both input spaces.

6. Conclusion

According to CMT, we do not only speak or write, but we also think in terms of metaphors. Depending on this notion, Fauconnier and Turner [18] investigate evidence for the blending mechanism using a diverse range of data, including everyday language, idioms, literary metaphors, non-verbal action conceptualization, creative mathematical thinking, the development of sociocultural models, jokes, and advertising. For Fauconnier and Turner [26], the process of blending dynamically occurs at the moment of perception to create new meanings through thinking.

The results have showed that previous theories of metaphor, like Interaction Theory and CMT, cannot totally interpret advertisements in terms of metaphor. The idea of directionality from source to target domains is problematic. However, metaphor mechanism takes place through combing and blending a set of directional mappings. Thus, through the deep analysis of CBT, this study has arrived at a conclusion that CBT is a suitable model to analyze advertisements. This is also because idiomatic expressions employed in these kinds of adverts can evidently be explained by CBT. The study also assumes that different networks can be used in examining metaphoric advertisements, namely simplex networks, mirror networks, single-scope networks and double-scope networks. Thus, CBT is the best one that can provide a more complete clarification for metaphoric advertisements.

This discussion briefly sketched the theoretical issues of metaphor studies, and the place of metaphor in advertisement, in general and Arabic in specific. Under investigation, five metaphoric advertisements were selected from Arabic media in order to be analyzed according to CBT. Analyzing these metaphors showed that the mapping is not a matter of linking two things as source and target, but deeply projecting between two related input MSs to create blended one within a frame. The study also showed that some metaphors are very difficult to be analyzed because they involve invisible metaphors. The advertisements of 'Coca Cola _ taste of the moment' and Cold your summer with 7 up, for instance, cannot links two domains (taste and the moment) in which they have no clear connection. However, CBT successes to deal with this problem by representing the word 'moment' as used metaphorically to refer to Coca Cola.

CONFLICT OF IN TERESTS
There are no conflicts of interest

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Appendix

The selected metaphors from Arabic advertisements that are translated into English:

English	Arabic
Almarai - Obesity is a killer monster	المراعي- البدانة وحش قاتل
Raid - the creeping insecticide: ready for battle	ريد مبيد الحشرات الزاحفة: جاهزين للمعركة
Coca Cola - taste of the moment	كوكا كولا ذوق اللحظة
Al-Emlaq super Gel	العملاق سوبر جل
Cold your summer with 7 up	برد صيفك مع 7up

Almarai _ Obesity is a killer monster

Raid -the creeping insecticide: ready for battle

Coca Cola - taste of the moment

Al-Emlaq super Gel

Cold your summer with 7 up