

A Cognitive Semantic Study of Verbal Irony in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*

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دراسة دلالية معرفية للسخرية اللفظية في المسرحية "حفلة عيد ميلاد" هارولد بينتر

الملخص

تقدم هذه الدراسة للسخرية اللفظية حساباً نوعياً جديداً ضمن نظرية المزج المفاهيمي للدلالات المعرفية. مشكلة الدراسة هي كيف يمكن للمتحدث أن يبني المعنى وينقله للمستمع باستخدام كلمات معاكسة للمعنى المقصود. يتم جمع البيانات من مسرحية حفلة عيد الميلاد للمخرج هارولد بينتر وتحليلها وفقاً لنموذج نظرية المزج المفاهيمي من خلال طريقة الاستبطان. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن بناء المعنى في السخرية اللفظية يتم عبر نوع معين من شبكة التكامل المفاهيمي ، شبكة أحادية النطاق ، مع خمس عمليات ذهنية مترابطة ومتكاملة بشكل لا ينفصل. الأول هو بناء فضاء الإدخال وتحقيق محتوَاهما المشترك من الفضاء العام الذي يحتوي على المعرفة الموسوعية و / أو الخلفية و / أو سياق الخطاب. والثاني هو عقد علاقة حيوية بالفضاء الخارجي بسبب العناصر المقابلة لمساحات الإدخال. والثالث هو الضغط بسبب مسافات الإدخال إطارات مميزة ، والرابع هو إسقاط إطار وعناصر بشكل انتقائي على الفضاء الممزوج حيث تم فصل عناصر وإطارات مسافات الإدخال بالضغط. الخامس هو إعادة صياغة العناصر المتوقعة بالإطار المسقط ، أي الهيكل الناشئ والمعنى الفعلي للسخرية اللفظية. وبالتالي ، فإن ما يقال هو عكس ما هو مقصود في الواقع في السخرية اللفظية هو كله مسألة وجود إطارات مميزة في فضاءات الإدخال التي تسبب الصراع والعلاقة الحيوية المتناقضة مع الفضاء الخارجي ويتم حلها أخيراً إما عن طريق اختيار الإطار والعناصر أو مجرد إطار- التحول في الفضاء الممزوج. وخلصت الدراسة أيضاً إلى أنه في اتصال السخرية اللفظية ، يأخذ المستمع نفس الشبكة المفاهيمية للتصور ، ولكن ليس بالضرورة أن يتحرك عبر الشبكة بترتيب المتحدث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المزج المفاهيمي ، السخرية اللفظية ، الإطار ، العلاقة الحيوية والضغط.

Abstract

This study offers the verbal irony a new qualitative account within Conceptual Blending Theory of cognitive semantics. The study problem is how can meaning be constructed by the speaker and communicated to the listener via using opposing words for the intended meaning. The data is collected from Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* play and analysed according to the Conceptual Blending Theory model through Introspection method. In this model, there are spaces: a generic, two input spaces and the blended space. The application showed that meaning construction in verbal irony is all done via a specific type of conceptual integration network, single-scope network, with five inseparably interrelated and supplementary mental

processes. The first is building the two input spaces and achieving their mutual content from the generic space that contains encyclopaedic, background and/or discourse context knowledge. The second is holding an outer-space vital relation because of input spaces counterpart elements. The third is compression because of the input spaces distinct frames, and the fourth is a projection of a frame and elements selectively to the blended space as the input spaces elements and frames were separated with compression. The fifth is reframing the projected elements with the projected frame, that is the emergent structure and the actual meaning of the verbal irony. Thus, what is said is opposite to what is actually meant in verbal irony is all a matter of having distinct frames in the input spaces that causes conflict and contradictory outer-space vital relation which finally solved by either frame and elements selection or just frame-shifting in the blended space. The study also concluded that in the communication of verbal irony the listener takes the same conceptual network for the conception, but not necessarily moving through the network in the speaker's order.

Key words: *Conceptual Blending, Verbal Irony, Frame, Vital relation and Compression.*

١. Theoretical Framework

١,١ Literature Review

The literature review is divided into two periods, and both are arranged chronologically. The first period covers the early accounts on verbal irony which most of them discuss it generally in relation to other figures of speech within literary genres. The second period is rather specific and dedicated only to the most recent accounts on verbal irony, particularly those works that study it linguistically.

١,١,١ General Accounts of Verbal Irony

Irony as a word originates in the *eironi*, which describes the main features of the characters in classical Greek comedian works revolving around the conflict between two characters (Claire, ٢٠٠٤, p. ١٧). Aristotle was the first one to tackle it within the frame of his humour works. Ross states that high sophistications needed to understand verbal irony utterances (Ross, ٢٠١٠, pp. ١٥٦-١٥٧). The Roman grammarians also used verbal irony as a trope that shows the opposite of what one perceives in the fourth century AD (Rowland and Birney, ١٩٨٥, p. xvi). Then in discourse, verbal irony is used as Bakhtin (١٩٨١, p. ٣٢٤) defines it by double voiced discourse. Similarly, Wright (١٩٨٣, p. ٣٩٢) sees it as a matter of the conflict of meanings.

There are few general works on verbal irony including Wolfsdorf (٢٠٠٧, p.٤٧٤) who states that verbal irony is the use of a word in a definite way that the intended meaning is different from the surface meaning. Just like the difference between the appearance and reality. There is another work by Keenoy (٢٠١٢, p.٢٤) who views it as a figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that expressed by the words used. In Keenoy's work, verbal irony usually takes the form of sarcasm or ridicule in which laudatory expressions are used to imply condemnation or disapproval. Another recent work is Fell's (٢٠١٣, p.٨) where it stated that verbal irony is the use of words to mean something different from what is actually said by the speaker. In that work, verbal irony is differentiated from other types of irony as in this it is rather the speaker's intentional use of it. In any conversation the speaker uses verbal irony when they would like their meaning to be understood as something different to what they literally say. When the listener, the reader and the audience become aware of the falsity of that literal meaning, verbal irony succeeds, otherwise there is failure in transmitting the message.

The general accounts consider verbal irony rather in a short, unspecified and less clear perspectives, and it was only seen as a figure of speech. Later, the other works tried to account for verbal irony in more accurate ways. The recent works provide enough details by stating its features and intentions of use. Thus, verbal Irony has usually been studied as a figure of speech or at its best as a figure of thought where in both of them what one says is just the opposite to what they would like to convey.

١,١,٢ Linguistic Accounts of Verbal Irony

There are also several specific linguistic accounts on verbal irony such as *Grice's Conversational Maxims* in (١٩٧٥). Grice realised that speakers attempt to convey more meanings than what they say. He further argues that conversation can be successful only when the listener cooperates. This made him to formulate *Cooperative Principle*, which states that make your conversational contribution such as is required as the state at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice, ١٩٩١, pp. ٣٠٦-٣٠٩). Grice's account has two significant points: the first an expectation is made in both the speaker and the listener. The second, Grice's maxims are violated as a way to gain a special

communicative effect, and the listener needs to decode the message in order to understand the ironical utterance since it is coded as an implicature. In this context, verbal irony is understood as flouting or blatant breach of the maxim of quality.

Then, *Pretense Theory* was proposed by Clark and Gerrig in (١٩٨٤) in which the speaker of verbal irony does not try to perform a speech act, but pretends to do it. The intention of the speaker is to give a specific attitude to both the speech act and those who understand it. According to this account, the listener must have the ability to understand that the ironist pretends to provide more information than what is said and expresses a specific attitude towards their utterance. However, this account is in short to cover the other possible attitudes that can be expressed by the speaker. Just like Grice's account, this account does not solve the problem of verbal irony, as is seen in this example:

١. *You are a pig.*

In Grice's theory this example is not explained as a matter of flouting of quality maxim based on that the speaker must provide any false information. His account fails to explain how verbal irony can be differentiated with other types of figure of speech that in the same way break the same maxim of quality like example (١) as a metaphor. In Clark and Gerrig's account, the same problem is raised as the speaker makes as if both when accusing someone of being a 'pig', and when showing scepticism about a situation which is clearly different from what he thought it would be.

Later, another account was provided by Attardo and Raskin's (١٩٩١) under *General Theory of Verbal Humour* name. This theory was broadened of an earlier one by Raskin (١٩٨٥) named *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. But there are also disagreements with Grice on Verbal irony. Grice's account is constrained to provide enough explanation because an evaluation of the speaker's intention is needed, and flouting is sometimes understood as literal. Attardo also explains irony is not only a matter of flouting of maxim of quality but a violation of either the maxim of relevance or manner (Attardo, ٢٠٠١, pp. ١١٣-١١٤). The central point of Attardo's claim is that when the listener realises the ironical attitude of a text or an utterance, the listener

assumes that the maxim of relevance holds and that relevance of irony lies in the direction of an antiphrastic meaning.

In (٢٠٠٢) came Sperber and Wilson's *Echoic Account of Irony* within *Relevance Theory* whose goal was to find how the listener can infer the intended meaning of the speaker. Sperber and Wilson based their Relevance Theory on Grice's assumption that the listener's recognition to the speaker's intentions is the backbone of bearing any human communication. To them, automatic expectations are created by any of the communication utterances to guide the listener to attain the actual non/literal meaning that the speaker tries to convey (Sperber and Wilson, ٢٠٠٢, pp. ١-٢). They also argue that verbal irony and the notion of echo are closely related and even mutually dependent. This is because *interpretive use* is involved in verbal irony as the basic use of language, which itself is echo use (Wilson, ٢٠٠٦, p. ١٧٢٩). In their account, the language used in verbal irony is either *descriptive* by representing the state of affairs, or *interpretive* by representing other possibilities. There are problems with this account as well, including verbal irony is not explained in its own frame, but rather linked to echo uses of language. Their account just revolves around verbal irony at a surface level.

The most recent account is offered by Ruiz de Mendoza's named *Understanding Verbal Irony: A cognitive Linguistics Approach*, (٢٠١٤). This account is claimed to be within general cognitive linguistics where Ruiz de Mendoza locates irony in A IS B cognitive operations group. The A IS B formula is the reasoning in the form of understanding aspects of a concept either in terms of or in relation to aspects of another concept, as in this example:

(٢) *Nice day today!*

According to Benczes, et al. (٢٠١١, p. ١١٣), for such an example contextual clues are necessary to understand the verbal irony. One can think of a speaker who previously said, thought, or heard another person saying that *day will be a sunny day*, but the speaker realises that *the day is raining*. In this case, A is representing the actual state of affair of raining that is contradictory to a previous thought or utterance by the speaker himself or another person. Contrary to that, B is an imitation (echoing) this previous thought or utterance and suggests that the situation is completely contrary to

one described. There are drawbacks with this account, such as it is rather reformulating other accounts like Sperber and Wilson's *Echoic Account* than presenting a new one. Further, it does not set the account within any cognitive linguistic theories, it only explains verbal irony within psycholinguistic frame rather than a pure cognitive linguistic account as it claims for.

Therefore, all the shortcomings, problems and blurriness identified in the above accounts lead to the current study to be set differently from all the other accounts, and have its own contributions to verbal irony. The presented accounts have made competent clarifications and additions, but almost all have been unsuccessful to provide a unified comprehensive step-by-step frame for verbal irony to illustrate how meaning is actually constructed by the use of opposing words. Meaning, the limitation of the accounts presented above is that all of them are only concerned with the listener's decoding and inference to the meaning. This is a communication perspective of verbal irony, they have, indeed, defocused a more crucial side of verbal irony which is the actual meaning construction of it from the speaker's side. Studies on verbal irony must be more concerned with the meaning construction process from the speaker's side first, then the communication side. Because the speaker's mind is where the verbal irony is triggered first, semantically, just then it is communicated to the listener, pragmatically. Therefore, this study resorts to a rather conclusive account like the cognitive semantics to analyse the process of meaning construction bit by bit from the speaker's side, specifically investigating verbal irony within *Conceptual Blending Theory* henceforth (CBT) frame. Alongside this, how the listener can decode and infer that meaning in communication.

١,٢ Problem of the Statement

The problem in using verbal irony is that what is said is opposite to what is actually meant. Speakers do not actually mean what they literally say, once the listeners realise that, they need to decode a hidden implied meaning in order to derive the actual meaning from what is being said. The absence of the actual meaning and the presence of contrary meaning lead to the rise of these questions:

- How is the actual meaning constructed by using contradictory words and linguistic units? What are the mental processes in operation especially from the speaker's side?

- How is that actual meaning communicated between language users? Particularly how does the listener proceed to the actual meaning conception?

١,٣ Aims

The aim of the study is to conduct a qualitative research to investigate verbal irony within the cognitive semantics frame. In particular, how does the conceptual blending theory count for meaning construction via verbal irony.

Another aim is to find out how is that actual meaning communicated between language users based on the contradictory surface meaning.

١,٤ Hypotheses

The hypothesis is that verbal irony must be a matter of cognitive activity. Within CBT, verbal irony is all about bringing together semantically highly incompatible or even contradictory frames. It is a conflict between two input spaces to provide the blended space with their maximum level of structure and elements. After a number of mental processes, the whole mental operation ends by giving the blended space the frame from one input space and the elements from the other.

The other hypothesis is that communicating the actual meaning via verbal irony must be the matter of having the same mental processes being in operation, but not necessarily in the same order. And the communicators key stream to successfully proceed those mental processes is matching those opposing words to their encyclopaedic, background and/or contextual knowledge.

١,٥ Material, Model and Method

The study material is Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* play, first published in London by Encore Publishing, ١٩٥٧, which is a three-act comedy play. The play is about Stanley who is a former piano player lives in Meg and Petey's poor boarding house located in a seaside town on the south coast near London. On Stanley's birthday Goldberg and McCann, who are two ominous and evil strangers, arrive at the house and ruin Stanley's birthday party arranged by Meg by terrorising and taking him away. Unlike novel and poetry being expressed by narrators or poets, in plays the characters speak for themselves, how they think, speak and communicate. So, more diversity and validity can be obtained in the data.

Cognitive semantics is concerned with the mental construction of meaning and the communication of it by language users, the language of play can be the most suitable raw material for cognitive semantics studies as plays are set to be mirrors of life.

The study applies CBT model by Fauconnier and Turner (١٩٩٨) and (٢٠٠٢) that came to exist as the most developed theory that has verifications, extensions and additions to Mental Spaces Theory by Fauconnier (١٩٨٥; ١٩٩٤). The theory tries to account for meaning construction as an on-line mental activity and the rise of emergent structure. The crucial insight of this theory is that meaning construction typically involves an integration of the structure that gives rise to more than the sum of its parts. It is stated that in many cases meaning construction appears to derive from structure that is apparently unavailable in the linguistic or conceptual structure that functions as the input to the meaning construction process.

The verbal irony examples belong to a specific kind of conceptual integration network called single-scope network when the emergent structure of the blended space is made by the frame of one input space called the donor/the source input space, while the elements are projected from the other input space known as the target/focus input space.

The study uses *Linguistic Introspection Analysis* method that is conscious attention directed by a language user to particular aspects of language as manifest in their own cognition. This method was found by the cognitive semantics founding father Leonard Talmy in ٢٠٠٧, and highly praised and preferred in cognitive semantics studies. As he confirmed, it is the most suitable method to analyse interactive discourse as well as of offline thought. As the method leads to access different aspects of language as manifested in cognition, since in cognitive semantics language, is all about conceptual structuring (Talmy, ٢٠٠٧, pp.xi-xxi). The examples taken from the play are analysed within the theory's framework to realize how this model can explain the meaning construction of verbal irony. The theory's four spaces, the generic, the two input spaces and the blended space, are used on the taken examples so that it can be seen how the surface meaning in one input space and the intended meaning in the other input space contribute to the rise of the overall meaning in the blended space, as showed in the examples figures.

The study is only concerned with written discourse, specifically the written dramatic discourse that are the characters' communications in the play. The study procedure is a manual one including the reading of the play thrice for understanding, highlighting and extracting the areas and utterances that include verbal irony to match the study needs. After checking the accurateness of the extracted samples, CBT model is applied on them via linguistic introspection analysis method.

٢. The Application

In this application section several examples extracted from *The Birthday Party* play and analysed within CBT frame.

٢.١ Data Analysis and Explanation

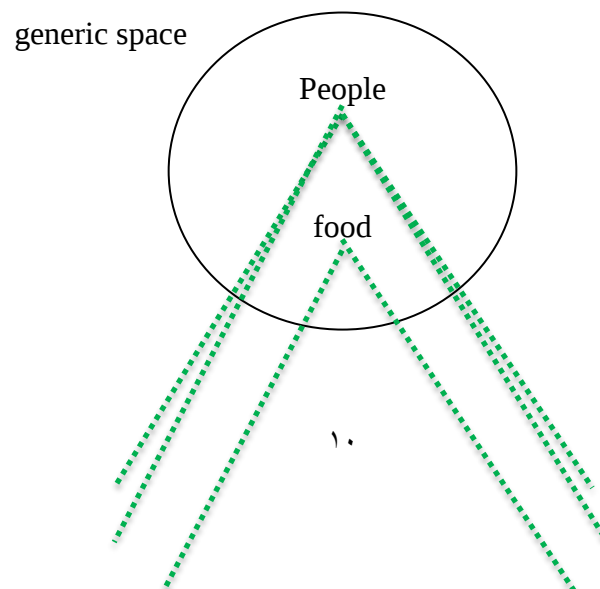
Conversational implicature is involved in verbal irony due to the fact that the literal meaning of the words employed by the speaker are counterfactual to the intended meaning, as in:

(٣) MEG (entering). *Well, I bet you don't know what it is.*
 STA NLEY. *Oh yes I do.*
 MEG. *What?*
 STA NLEY. *Fried bread.*
 MEG. *He knew.* (The Birthday Party, ١٩٥٧, p. ١١)
 STA NLEY. ***What a wonderful surprise.***

In example (٣) Meg, the hostess, and Stanley, the guest, are talking about breakfast. Stanley does know what Meg has brought him for two reasons: one is the repetition of the same food every breakfast, this is based on Stanley background knowledge in the play. The other is what Petey, Meg's husband, had just told him; this is the discourse context. After directly telling Meg I know what you have brought, yet when he receives it he says *what a wonderful surprise*. The Meaning is quite opposite, there is no surprise as he expected and knew what it was, fried bread.

In CBT frame, the speaker, Stanley, constructs the intended meaning via the opposing words, *what a wonderful surprise*, through a conceptual integration network. In the operation of this conceptual integration network there is a generic space built from encyclopaedic, background and/or contextual knowledge that contains *people* and *food* as its elements. Then, the two input spaces are being built based on the common information they obtain from the generic space to be their elements. Due to

obtaining common information from the generic space as their elements such as *Meg*, *Stanley* and *Breakfast*, the two input spaces have counterpart elements, and having counterpart elements makes them hold an outer-space vital relation. But because of having different frames of *No Surprise* and *Surprise* respectively for their elements, the input spaces outer-space vital relation is *incompatibility*. The main interrelated processes are still left to complete the meaning construction via the conceptual integration network, which are compression and projection. In proceeding those main processes, compression takes place over the input spaces incompatibility outer space vital relation and causes the input spaces elements to be deframed from their own frames. Concomitantly to this compression, the projection takes place too, where the *no surprise* frame of input space one, donor input space, and the *Stanley* and *Meg* elements of input space two, the focus input space, are projected to the blended space. In the blended space, the projected elements of input spaces two, *Meg*, *Stanley* and *breakfast* are reframed with a new frame, *no surprise*, which is the frame of the first input space element. Inside the blended space, the projected elements have *uniqueness* inner-space vital relation. In this way, *the breakfast brought by Meg is not surprise to Stanley*, '*fried bread*', rises as the emergent structure and that is the intended meaning of the speaker, as shown in figure ١.



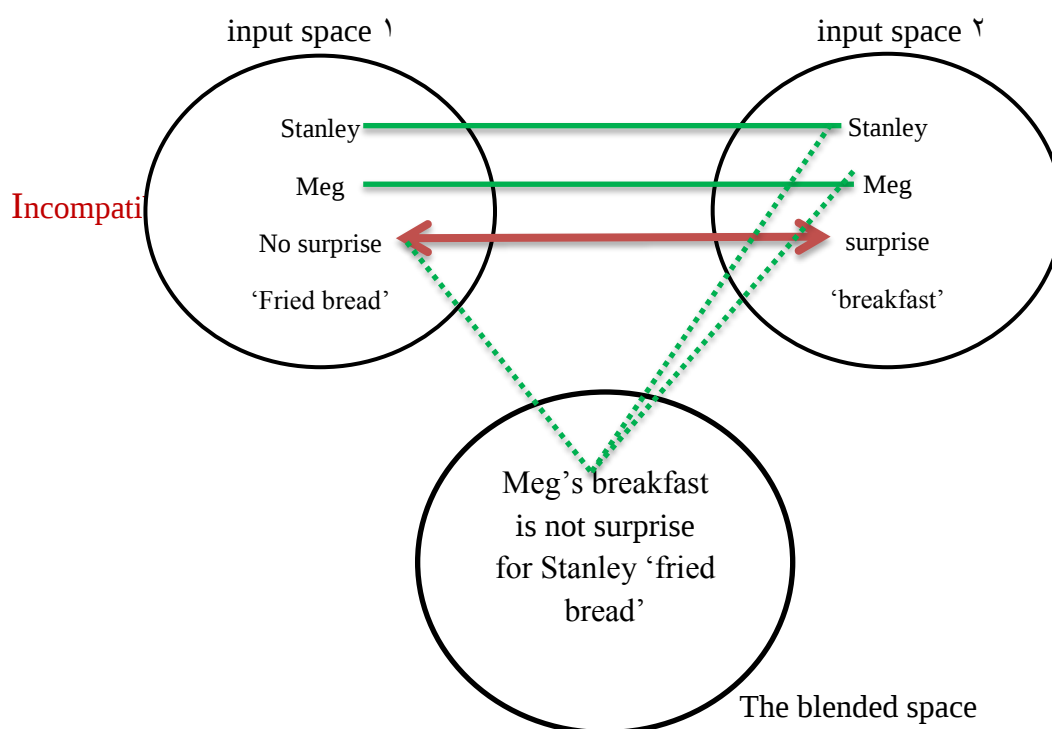


Figure ١ Incompatibility Vital Relation of Verbal Irony and Its Compressions into Uniqueness

With reference to the availability of the constructed meaning, in all conceptual integration network figures the generic space circle is represented with the thinnest line to stand for the high abstractness of its content, while the blended space circle is represented a thick and bold line to signify the least abstractness or even the concreteness of its emergent structure. The two input spaces take the middle ground position in this regard, whose circles are thicker than the generic space, but thinner than the blended space.

Example (٣) showed that in verbal irony the type of the network in operation is called single-scope network in which both of the input spaces have distinct frames. But only the frame of the first input space is projected to organize the blended frame, the second input frame is neglected and only its elements are projected into the blended space where once again they are reframed with the new frame, namely the first input spaces frame.

Example (٣) is a case *incompatibility*, which is a very strong contradiction between the two meanings and there is no middle ground when one meaning is included, the other is automatically excluded, as in the example (٣), ‘breakfast’, can

either be a *surprise* or *no surprise*. Following to the conversation, there is another example of a less strong and less clear verbal irony between the same two characters about the same topic, breakfast food.

(٤) MEG. Was it nice?

STA NLEY. What?

MEG. The fried bread.

STA NLEY. **Succulent.** (The Birthday Party, ١٩٥٧, p. ١٢)

MEG. You shouldn't say that word.

In example (٤) Meg and Stanley are still talking about the breakfast. When Meg says “was the fried bread nice?” Stanley answers her ironically and says “*succulent*” which literally means *juicy, tasty* and *pleasant*. But he actually means *very dry* and *unpleasant*. Within the CBT framework, the meaning is constructed through a conceptual integration network where there is generic space, that is encyclopaedic, background and/or contextual knowledge, just like example (٣), this generic space has *people* and *food* elements. Then, the two input spaces are being built and obtain common information from the generic space to be their elements. These pieces of common information are *Stanley, Meg*, and *fried bread* in the first input space, and *Stanley, Meg and fried bread* in the second input space. The input spaces elements, which are common pieces of information, are then counterpart elements, and having counterpart elements makes them hold an outer space vital relation. Because each input space has a different frame, *dry* and *succulent*, for their elements, the type of their outer space a vital relation contradictory. When the compression process takes place over their contradictory outer space vital relation, both input spaces elements are deframed from their frame. Exactly at the compression process time, the projection is taking place where frame of the first input space, the *dry* frame, is projected to the blended space, but the second input space frame, the *succulent* frame, is neglected. Instead, the second input space elements, *Meg, Stanley* and *fried bread* are projected to the blended space. once the projection is done, the *Meg, Stanley* and *fried bread* elements are reframed with a new frame of *dry*, which is the frame of the first input space elements. This reframing in the blended spaces gives rise to the emergent structure of *Meg's breakfast for Stanley is the dry 'fried bread'* in the blended space as it has the frame of *dry* and elements of *Meg, Stanley* and *Fried bread* with inner-space

vital relation of *uniqueness* because this vital relation did exist before the rise of the emergent structure, as shown in figure ٢ .

Therefore, the elements of the second input space and its frame are just used as triggers to access their counterpart targets in the first input space. Example (٤) is an instance of contradiction between two opposite meanings, frames, *dry* and *succulent*. There can also be a middle status between them as the breakfast can neither be succulent nor dry but something in-between and ordinary. The existence of that middle ground between the two meanings makes them contradictory and not incompatible.

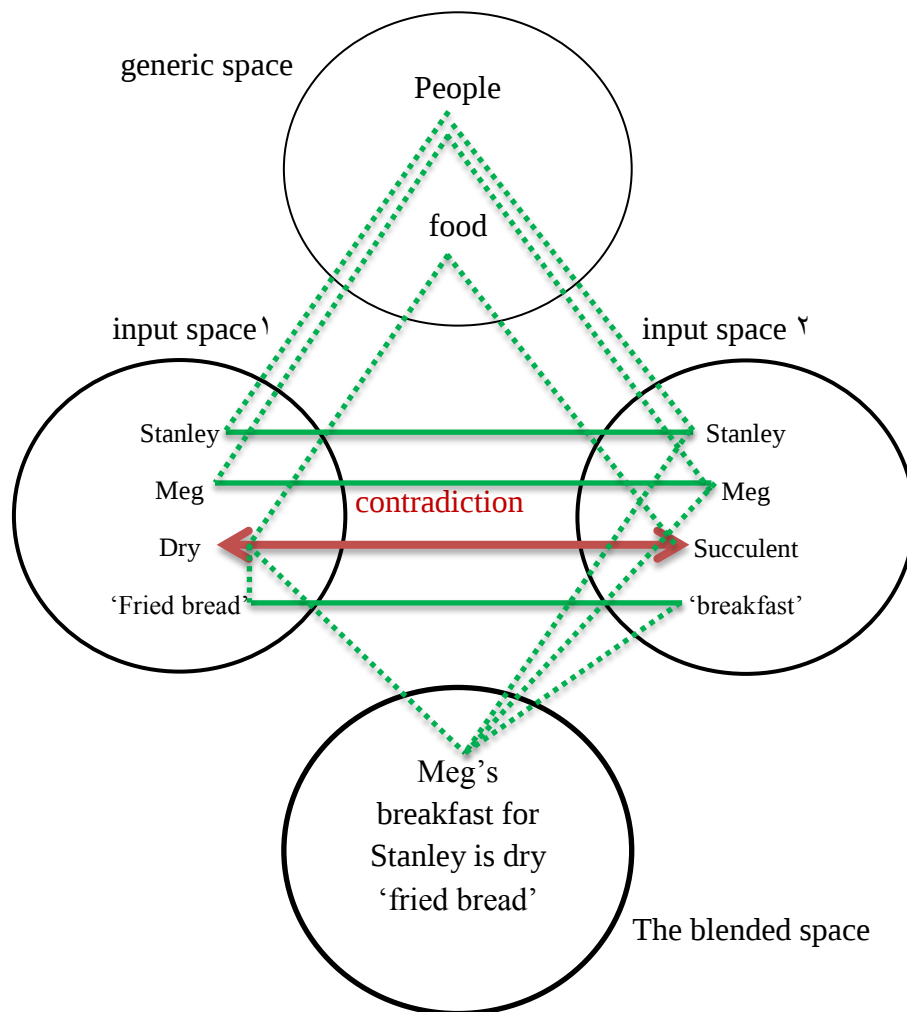


Figure ٢ Contradiction Vital Relation of Verbal Irony and Its Compressions into Uniqueness

٢,٢ Verbal Irony and Word Class

Word class can play a crucial role in structuring the ironical utterances. Verbal irony can be formed by different word classes like noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition. In this study data, out of ten verbal ironies eight of them are structured by adjectives and the other two by nouns. Thus, adjectives are the primary word class to form the expressions of verbal irony. This can belong to the fact that adjectives are generally descriptive words and most of the verbal ironies are descriptions of an opinion, person, event, place, entity, situation and state of affairs. So, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the adjective form of verbal irony and its communicative function. Along with examples of (٣ and ٤), take this example as well:

(٥) STANLEY. *You're here on a short stay?*

MCCANN. *That's right.*

STANLEY. *You'll find it very **bracing**.* (The Birthday Party, ١٩٥٧, p. ٢١)

In this example, Stanley is talking to Mccann who is a new guest to Meg and Petey's hostel. When Mccann says "I want to stay here", Stanley tells him "*You'll find it very **bracing**.*" The adjective *bracing* ordinarily means a *healthy place with fresh air*, but here Stanley actually means *unhealthy and stuffy*.

In CBT model, the meaning of the utterance is constructed by a conceptual integration network. There is a generic space built from Stanley's background knowledge that includes *place* and *state* elements which are mapped down onto the two input spaces as their common information and become their elements. The first input space has elements of *house* and *condition* framed by *stuffy*, and there are *it* and *condition* elements in the second input space framed by *bracing*. Having counterpart elements between the two input spaces, particularly 'it and house', leads them to hold an outer-space vital relation. Because the counterpart elements have distinct frames, their holding outer-space vital relation becomes *contradiction*. To achieve human scale, this outer-space vital relation undergoes a compression that deframes the first input space elements *Meg and Petey's house*, and *condition* from their frame, *stuffy*, and the second input space elements *it* and *condition* from their frame, *bracing*. Concurrently to this compression and deframing, the projection process also takes place in which the first input space frame, *stuffy*, as the frame source/frame donor input space, and the elements of *it* and *condition* of the second input space, as the target and focus of understanding input space, are projected to the blended space. In

the blended space the projected elements of *it* and *condition* are reframed with the new projected frame, *stuffy*, and this reframing process gives rise to the emergent structure of *Petey and Meg's house condition is stuffy*. This emergent structure is the intended meaning of Stanley's ironical utterance, as shown in figure ٣.

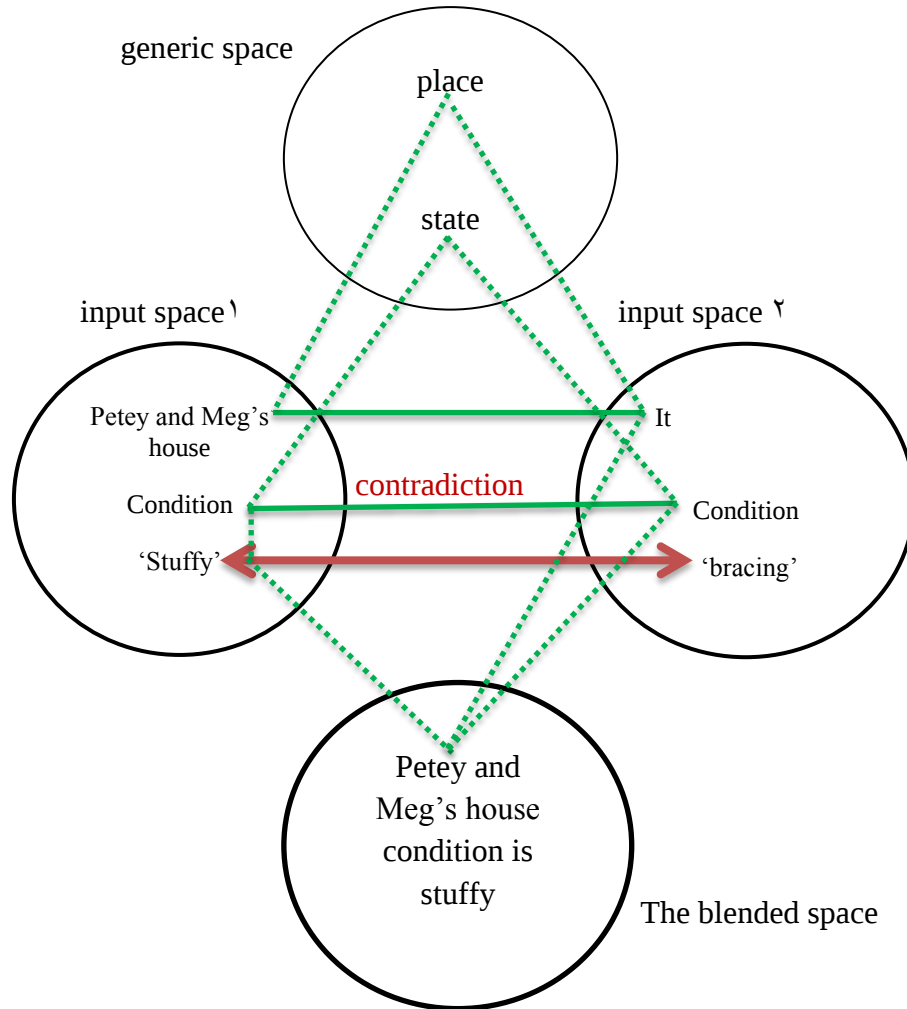


Figure ٣ Contradiction Vital Relation of Verbal Irony

Strikingly, verbal irony can be emphatically expressed by the comparative form of adjectives where both the literal and the intended meanings are given. When such a comparison is made by the adjective between two entities, the second entity is provided as a hint for further clarity and comprehension of the intended meaning of the first entity, which only gives the literal meaning, as in:

- (6) GOLDBERG. *But why is it that before you do a job you're all over the place, and when you're doing the job you're as cool as a whistle?*

(The Birthday Party, ١٩٥٧, p. ١٦)

Goldberg is talking to Mccann about fulfilling their mission. Here the word *whistle* is a hint given to make the contradiction obvious with *you are cool*. So, the intended meaning is Mccann you are not cool but actually *anxious*. The reason that Goldberg, as the speaker, expresses the verbal irony utterance in that way, he would really like to make the contradiction noticeable for the listener, Mccann. If Goldberg just had said *you are cool*, it could have meant:

- Mccann would have understood it like he is actually cool,
- or Mccann is not cool but not anxious either,
- or Mccann is anxious but to a normal level.

Thus, to avoid having any of these possible interpretations and conceptions for his utterance by Mccann, Goldberg adds the word *whistle* to put emphasis on the contradiction to Mccann's *coolness* that is a too much *anxiousness* to the level of *noisiness* and *disorderliness*.

Within the CBT analysis, such a meaning construction has a conceptual integration network. The generic space is where the speaker's background and/or contextual knowledge is stored, and this space is comprised of *people* and *mood/feeling* elements. The discourse context works like a contour to build the input spaces, just then these pieces of common information are mapped onto both input spaces and become their elements. So, there is *Mccann* element that has the frame of *anxiousness* in the first input space, and the second input space contains the *you* and *whistle* elements but framed by *coolness*. Because the two input spaces content is the common information achieved from the generic space, there are counterpart elements between the two input spaces such as *you* and *Mccann*. Having counterpart elements makes the input spaces hold an outer-space vital relation, but because each input space has its own distinct frame, the nature of their outer-space vital relation is *emphatic contradiction*. The distinct frames of each input space elements that caused the nature of their outer-space vital relation to be *emphatic contradiction* makes the pieces of the information diffused. Therefore, compression process must happen to achieve human scale by compressing what is diffused. The compression process deframes both input spaces elements from their frames of *anxiousness* and *coolness* respectively. Together with the compression, projection also takes place where the frame of *anxiousness* in the first input space and the element of *you* in the second input space are projected to

the blended space. In the blended space the element *you* is reframed with the new projected frame of *anxiousness*, and this reframing gives rise to the emergent structure of *Mccann you are anxious which makes you noisy and disorderly*, as shown in figure 4.

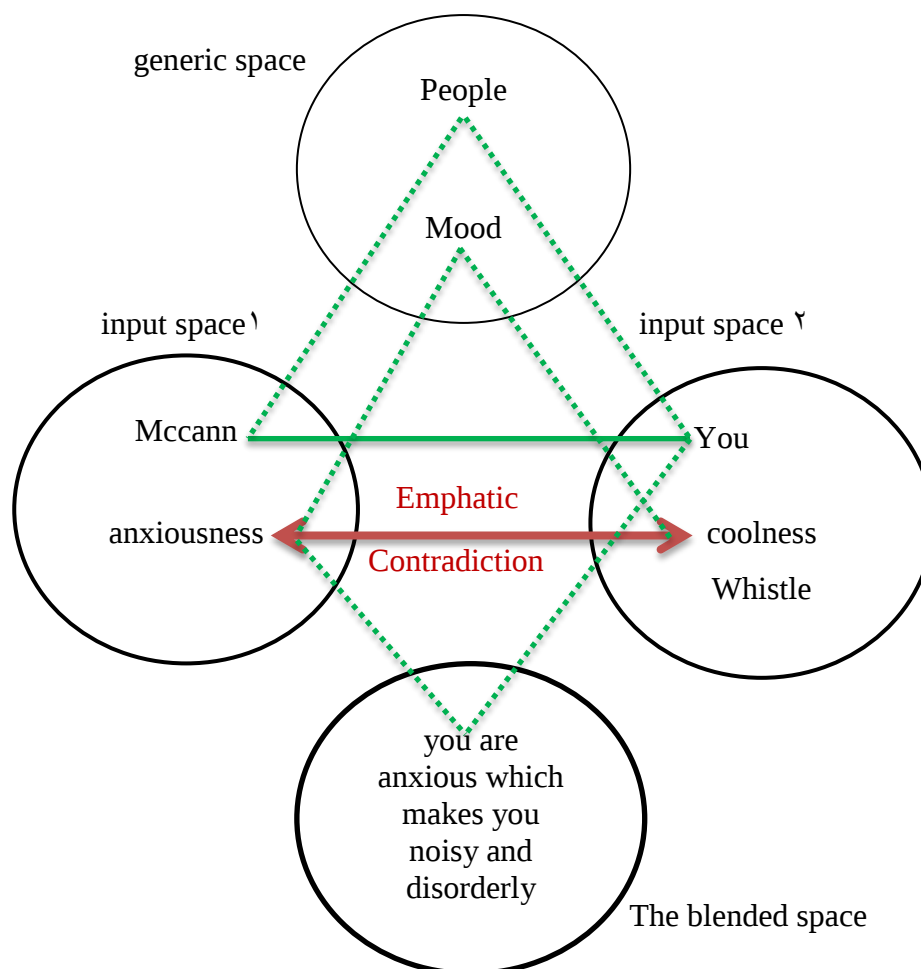


Figure ٤ Emphatic Contradiction Vital Relation of Verbal Irony Via Comparison

٢,٣ Findings and Discussion

١. Reviewing its literature showed that verbal irony has a long history, but till the mid-seventies it had only been generally and shallowly studied in literature. From the mid-seventies onwards, the linguistic accounts have started but all focussed on the communication aspects of verbal irony. The meaning construction side has either been downgraded or completely neglected, which is the actual trigger of it and just after that construction its communication function starts.

٢. Verbal irony, alongside being literary devices to add humour and disagreement, it is a linguistic tool, particularly within cognitive semantics realm, it is a meaning construction device from which it is extended to fulfil its literary role.
٣. The soul of the verbal irony meaning construction is the conceptual integration network, and the cause of compression in the network is the human cognitive super capacity of compressing what is diffused, and the decision of what elements and frames are to be projected is matching the linguistic units to the encyclopaedic, background and/or contextual knowledge by the communicators.
٤. CBT analysis showed that the speaker's meaning construction via the use of verbal irony is achieving human scale that requires the compression of what is diffused. Thus, human mind has the super capacity to integrate such apparently incompatible semantic structures like of verbal irony into new scenarios that appear intuitively appropriate, and this integration ability lies at the very heart of all human cognising.
٥. There is a kind of effort-making in verbal irony use because human beings tend to perceive differences between two or more things/entities that are fairly similar in a much easier manner than between things/entities that are very different or opposing, such as in verbal irony.
٦. It can be concluded that the model application to verbal irony has showed that the type of the network is a specific kind of conceptual integration network called single-scope network as the emergent structure of the blended space is made by the frame of one input space called the donor/the source input space, while the elements are projected from the other input space known as the target/focus input space, as in examples (٥) and (٦).
٧. Within the single-scope integration network the emergent structure of the blended spaces can be made by a special mental strategy known as *frame-shifting* in cognitive semantics meaning making phenomenon.

In this frame-shifting strategy the input spaces have the same elements but distinct frames. This is because in verbal irony saying what is opposite to what is actually meant causes having opposing frames between the two input spaces. Thus, there is frame conflicting when the outer-space vital relation is established between the input spaces and ending up by projecting one of the input space frames, the first input space frame, while the second input space frame is left out and was just used

to make the irony. In the blended space the emergent structure has the same elements as both of the input spaces but with a new frame, as in examples (٣) and (٤).

٨. Adjectives are the first word class to form the expressions of verbal irony, this is because adjectives are descriptive constructions and most of the verbal ironies are descriptions of an opinion, person, event, place, entity, situation and state of affairs.
٩. Even among adjectives, some verbal ironies show less oppositeness between the two meanings than the other. Examples (٤) and (٥) are contradictory but because it is just not what the speaker says, this does not necessarily imply that the absolute opposite meaning is meant. Thus, there can be a norm as middle ground between the two meanings, the *breakfast* can be neither *dry* nor *succulent*, but *ordinary* one, and the *house* can neither be *bracing* nor *stuffy* but an *average* place. Comparisons between examples (٤) and (٥), examples of (٣) and (٦) show a greater oppositeness between what is said and what is actually meant. Therefore, the outer-space vital relation established between the two input spaces are not only contradictory, but incompatible, the inclusion of one meaning excludes the other. Based on the oppositeness level, verbal irony utterances can be graded on a continuum of being the least ironical to the most ironical utterances.
١٠. Emphasis can be put on the verbal irony by the comparative form of adjectives where both the literal and the intended meanings are given, as in example (6). In such a case the two entities are compared by an adjective, the second entity is provided as a hint for further clarity and comprehension of the intended meaning of the first entity, which only gives the literal meaning. The emphasis also raises the degree of oppositeness between the two meanings from contradictory to emphatic contradictory, which can be equal to incompatibility.

٣ Conclusion

The CBT analysis has concluded that the meaning construction in verbal irony is wholly done through a conceptual integration network. This network covers a series of highly interrelated, subsequent and complementary processes. The speaker's encyclopaedic, background and/or discourse context knowledge is stored in a highly

abstract space called generic space. The first process starts based on this generic space when discourse opens and progresses, the input spaces are being built online and achieve their common information from the generic space content. The first input space includes the actual intended meaning, after that comes the second input space that includes the opposite meaning. Because the input spaces achieve their content from the common information provided to them by the generic space, there are counterpart elements between the input spaces.

Subsequently after that, the second process starts as these counterpart elements make the input spaces hold an outer-space vital relation where the second input space elements become triggers to access their target elements in the first input space. But because each input space has its own distinct frame for its elements, the nature and type of their outer-space vital relation becomes opposite to various degrees of contradiction. Having distinct frames for their elements and holding a contradictory outer-space vital relation makes the input spaces pieces of information diffused. To overcome this diffusion and achieve human scale, the third process, which is the key mental process and strategy of meaning making, must take place and that is compression to compress what is diffused. Once the compression is happening, the input spaces elements are deframed from their elements and ready to concomitantly proceed to the fourth process, projection.

The projection process comprises bringing one of the input spaces frame, that is the first input space known as the frame donor input space, and also bringing the second input space elements, known as the target input space, to the blended space. The fifth and the last process happens inside the blended space where the projected elements are reframed with the new projected frame and it is this reframing process that gives rise to the emergent structure.

The CBT analysis has also showed that the communication of that actual meaning to the listener is the matter of moving through the same conceptual network but not necessarily in the speaker's order of movement. For the conception of the actual meaning, in the first process the listener is exposed the verbal irony at first that is the second input space with its elements and their frame. In the second process the listener matches that second input space to the discourse context and sees these pieces of communication information have been diffused. Thus, the listener uses the second input space elements as triggers to access other pieces of information, namely the

targets in the first input space. When the listener reaches the target elements in the first input space and realises that each input space frame is different from the other, the listener conceives the contradictory outer-space vital relation holding between them, and thus, resorts to the third process of compression. Along with compression, the projection is also taking place as the fourth process. Finally, in the fifth process the listener reframes the projected elements with the projected frame in the blended space for the actual meaning full conception and knows that the speaker's utterance is a verbal irony.

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