Semantic Leaps in Bollywood Film Songs
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Conceptual blending is a basic mental operation that leads to new meaning, global insight, and conceptual compressions useful for memory and manipulation of otherwise diffuse ranges of meaning. It plays a fundamental role in the construction of meaning in everyday life, in the arts and sciences, and especially in the social and behavioral sciences. The essence of the operation is to construct a partial match between two inputs, to project selectively from those inputs into a novel 'blended' mental space, which then dynamically develops emergent structure. It has been suggested that the capacity for complex conceptual blending ("double-scope" integration) is the crucial capacity needed for thought and language.

Conceptual blending is described and studied scientifically in terms of integration networks. In its most basic form, a conceptual integration network consists of four connected mental spaces: two partially matched input spaces, a generic space constituted by structure common to the inputs, and the blended space. The blended space is constructed through selective projection from the inputs, pattern completion, and dynamic elaboration. The blend has emergent dynamics. It can be "run", while its connections to the other spaces remain in place. Neurobiologically, it has been suggested that elements in mental spaces correspond to activated neural assemblies and that linking between elements corresponds to neurobiological binding (e.g. co-activation). On this view, mental spaces are built up, interconnected, and blended in working memory by activating structures available from long-term memory. Mental spaces can be

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modified dynamically as thought and discourse unfold. Four main types of integration networks have been distinguished: Simplex, Mirror, Single-Scope, Double-Scope. In Simplexes, one input consists of a frame and the other consists of specific elements. A frame is a conventional and schematic organization of knowledge such as "buying gas." In Mirrors, a common organizing frame is shared by all spaces in the network. In Single-Scopes, the organizing frames of the inputs are different, and the blend inherits only one of those frames. In Double-Scopes, essential frame and identity properties are brought in from both inputs. Double-Scope Blending can resolve clashes between inputs that differ fundamentally in content and topology. This is a powerful source of human creativity. The main types of networks just mentioned are actually prototypes along a continuum that anchors our intuitive everyday notions about meaning to a unified understanding of the unconscious processes at work. Varieties of meaning traditionally considered unequal or even incommensurable— categorizations, analogies, counterfactuals, metaphors, rituals, logical framing, grammatical constructions—can all be situated on this continuum. Conceptual blending has been shown to operate in the same way at the highest levels of scientific, artistic, and literary thought, and at the supposedly lower levels of elementary understanding and sentence meaning. Elaborate blending is at work in superficially very simple expressions like "safe gun" vs. "safe child", "guilty pleasures", "caffeine headache", or "money problem". Emergent structure arises routinely, as in "This surgeon is a lumberjack" which suggests that the surgeon is incompetent although *incompetence* is neither a feature of *surgeon* nor of *lumberjack*.

There are opposing pressures within an integration network to maximize topology matching, integration, unpacking of the blend, web connections, compression, and intentionality. More complex integration networks ("multiple blends") allow multiple input spaces, and successive blending in which blends at one level can be inputs at another. Blending is a remarkable tool of compression over vital relations like time, space, cause-effect, identity, and change. In the Newborn Ritual, time is compressed: an entire lifetime becomes, in the blend, the short time it takes to climb the stairs; in the Nixon counterfactual, space is compressed (Watergate can be

in France); in the Desktop interface, the complex sequence of events which move the mouse horizontally and cause an apparent vertical motion of the arrow (and other 'objects') on the screen is compressed and integrated into a single action — moving the arrow. This is a compression of space, cause effect, and change.

A systematic study of conceptual blending was initiated in 1993 by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, who discovered the structural uniformity and wide application of the notion. Since then, important work has been done on the theory of conceptual blending, and its empirical manifestations in mathematics, social science, literature, linguistics , and music. For example cognitive pragmatics is concerned with the mental processes involved in intentional communication. Studies within the area of pragmatics mainly focus on the comprehension of linguistic speech act and overlook linguistic production or extralinguistic communication. As far as cognitive processes are concerned authors in this field are interested in both the inferential chains necessary to understand a communicator's intention starting from the utterance he extends and the different mental representations underlying the comprehension of various communicative phenomena as cognitive processes. Thus, a theory in cognitive pragmatics aims to explain what mental processes a person actually engages in during a communicative interaction. Nonetheless, in the last decade, other theories have been developed. These include a far-reaching theory of the cognitive processes underlying human communication, known as the Cognitive Pragmatics Theory (Airenti et al., 1993a, 1993b; Bara, 005), and the Graded Salience Hypothesis (Giora, 2003), a theory which focuses on mental inferences underlying the comprehension of literal vs. figurative language.

Airenti et al. (1993a, 1993b) presented a theory of the cognitive processes underlying human communication aiming to provide a unified theoretical framework for the explanation of different communicative phenomena (Bara, 2005). The authors proposed that their theoretical analysis holds for both linguistic and extralinguistic communication, and thus introduced, with reference to the interlocutors, the terms 'actor' and 'partner' instead of the classical 'speaker' and 'hearer.' The theory assumes that the literal

meaning of an utterance is necessary but not sufficient to the partner in order for him or her to reconstruct the meaning conveyed by the actor, and that in order to understand the actor's communicative intention, the partner has to recognize a 'behavior game' the actor is proposing for him (the partner) to play. The behavior game is a social structure mutually shared by the participants of the communicative interaction.

The theoretical frame work of cognitive pragmatics is crucial to demystify the conceptual integration, or blending which is viewed as a powerful, authoritative, and universal operation in human cognition. Conceptual blending is a theory of meaning construction, in which elements from activated knowledge structures, or *mental spaces* are selectively projected to a *blended space*. The projected elements are re-assembled in the blended space to create a new unique structure, or *blend*. Coulson (1997, 2001) uses as an example the activity of "trashcan basketball" where university students vie to throw crumpled pieces of paper into a wastebasket. This activity can be construed as a blend that activates two knowledge structures, namely garbage disposal and basketball, and integrates elements from these input spaces (Coulson 2001). Blends may be developed, or elaborated, according to the constraints of the blended space. For example, in trashcan basketball, there may be rules that differ from either input space; players may need to be far enough away from the trashcan to "score" a basket. This would be a property unique to the blend (Fauconnier and Turner 2002).

Crucially, blends are connected in principled ways to their input sources, and therefore evoke a conceptual *network* of several interlinked mental spaces. For example, the blend "Coorg Style Sari Wearing" is a conceptual network with an input space containing knowledge about conventional *Sari* and another input space containing knowledge about skirt. Links between the spaces, or *cross-space mappings* connect analogous elements from each input space, such as number of members, length and intensity of commitment, and love. Select aspects of each space such as the wedding ritual, tax laws, and domestic roles, are projected into the blend to create a unique concept that may then be elaborated with *emergent* properties of its own.

Blending, or the creation of a new unique structure, occurs in dynamic, everyday meaning construction. The blending model has been used to account for specific linguistic phenomena such as nominal and adjectival compounds (Coulson 1997), grammatical constructions (Fauconnier 1997; Fauconnier and Turner 1996), counterfactuals (Fauconnier 1997; Fauconnier and Turner 1998), humor (Coulson 1996, in press) and narrative (Oakley 1998). Blending also occurs in the construction of meanings that become entrenched as part of our technological or cultural heritage, including ideas such as the computer desktop interface, complex numbers, writing, or cultural rituals. Recent research studies in Cognitive Pragmatics have showcased the application of blending theory to analyses of young children's play (Sinha 2005). It is argued that conceptual integration is fundamental to the activities that define human beings and distinguish us from other species, such as language, science, and religion (Fauconnier and Turner 2002).

In this paper, conceptual blending is used to model the intricacies of meaning construction in Bollywood film songs and its usage in everyday interaction. The paper cites two diverse instances of film songs to unravel the mysteries of meaning constructions in film songs. An analysis of the conceptual networks evoked by the texts of the film songs reveals the basic cognitive operations that account for the sexual or humorous interpretation of the texts. The analysis also demonstrates that all blends are created through a common underlying mechanism known as category extension. Finally, it is proposed that social and contextual aspects of knowledge frames play an important role in the meaning construction of conceptual blends.

The paper makes reference to Koestler's theory of bi-association, "the perceiving of a situation or idea ... in two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference" and also proposes "cognitive dissonance" as a way to conceive of the concept of incongruity.

Frames

Frames which are conceived of as structures for input spaces or for blends are one of the fundamental tools used in blending theory. According to Fauconnier and Turner (1998), an organizing frame "provides a set of organizing relations among the elements in the space." For example, definitions of words such as 'Seminar' or 'Conference' depend on the existence of a frame for the organization of academic culture in academic society. This view of frames, widely employed in psychology, artificial intelligence, and linguistics, has its roots in the concept 'schema' in Gestalt psychology, where concepts are understood relationally as part of a system. A broader view of the notion of frame used in anthropology, ethnography, and sociology, introduced by Bateson and further developed by Hymes and Goffman, is used to understand "the level of abstraction at which any message is intended" (Tannen 1993: 18), that is, "whether the activity being engaged in is joking, imitating, chatting, lecturing, or performing a play" (Tannen 1993: 18). Goffman (1974) discusses frames as providing an answer to the question "What is it that's going on here?" (Goffman 1974: 25). Tannen (1993) provides a comprehensive description of frames as basically 'structures of expectations', encompassing both approaches outlined above; that is "on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or a combination of cultures), one organizes knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences" (Tannen 1993: 16).

A wide range of frames as defined above by Tannen, including both knowledge about specific word meaning as well as cultural experiences, are essential in the cognitive modeling of blends. In the case of trashcan basketball, semantic frames for the action of "disposal," as well as for the activity of "basketball" provide background knowledge necessary for construction of the blend. In the case of the Urdu idiomatic expression 'Sau cuhe kha kar Billi chali Haj ko' general relational frames such as the sin frame, or the wrongdoing frame as well as specific frames for the pilgrimage are essential for meaning construction. In sum, frames give structure to the interpretation of events at semantic, interactional, relational and even socio-cultural levels. Meaning construction in blends, especially

film song blends recruit frames at all levels of interpretation. The analysis of the blends below focuses especially on the role of interactional frames that define the social meanings of the text, in the construction of meaning in two Bollywood film songs analysed in the paper. To analyse the interactional frames in Bollywood film songs the paper makes use of Cognitive Pragmatic model which is concerned with the mental processes involved in intentional communication.

To elaborate it further let's examine the film song *Sakhi sayan to khubi kamat hain, Mahangai Dayan khae jat hai.* The use of *Mahangai Dayan* in the film song is another example of conceptual blend. The song cited above weaves a complex blended space throughout the song. As presented in the movie, this blend supplies its elements from at least three input spaces, the village space, the folk song space, and the poverty and the frustration space. These spaces are connected through an extensive network of cross mappings, or analogical connectors that link similar elements, such as a village and a folk song *mandali*. The blended space includes partial projection from each of the input spaces. The overall blend is created by projecting the category of hunger and frustration. The participants are projected from the village space, and their personalities are projected from the village Pipli and farming spaces.

The compression of elements from the different spaces results in multiple incongruities within the blend and creates a situation. First, the extension of the folk song category to the activity of usher evokes a strong contrast of socio-cultural values. The blend compresses a fundamental incongruity between folk activity, which is musical and traditional and associated with values such as selflessness, and altruism.

Another key aspect of the blend is the extent to which the details are developed in the song. In the blended space where the notion of *Dayan Mahngai* is set up, the details of the *mahangai* are specified which activate cultural knowledge about the village. The expression *Dayan* in the song refers to a woman in a village especially low down in the social hierarchy which has the supernatural power of bringing misfortune to others in the village as a practitioner of *Dayan partha.* Witch craft in India

is still part of the rural culture of India where the villagers blame anything they don't understand on the most ancient Hindu customs of *tantra*. In this song there is a conceptual blend of *Dayan* and *mahangai* which gel effectively and helps in projecting the misfortune which *mehangai* brings.

The conceptual blend in the song serves to strengthen the meaning construction process, through extensive compression of the analogical connections in the blended space. Such an approach makes it possible to better comprehend how meaning is constructed in film songs from a cognitive perspective.

For further elaboration let us consider another popular Bollywood film song *Munni badanm hui Darling tere liye, Munni Jhandu Balm hui Darling tere liye.*

The song presented above is a conceptual blend used in the song of the film DABANG. It is being used in everyday interaction among film viewers and is found humorous by the participants in the conversation. The song is shown in a scene in a hideout of criminals. The blend is constructed from two input spaces, a space for the general concept of " Balm", and a space for a highly suggestive and seductive dance sequence. As shown in the movie, select elements are projected from each input space to create a novel conceptual blend of *Jhandu Balm* and *munni* in the blended space. Projected from the balm space are features such as comfort, solace, and relief, while the body movement, seductive gestures and dance steps space project characteristics such as sexual provocation, and teasing and sizzling effect. What does contribute to the interpretation of this blend are the various incongruities, contradictions, and tensions compressed within the blended space.

First, in this example, elements with socio-cultural values at opposite poles are compressed in the blended space. This juxtaposition is strengthened by the "humorous" framing of the utterance created by the conversational context in the expressions like *Shilpa sa figure and Bebo si Ada hai mere jhatke main Filmy maza*. Within this humorous frame, word processing is valued as more colloquial, informal garnished with slang.

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The humor in this interaction is generated in part by exploiting the contrast or incongruity in values between two spaces of *Jhandu balm* and *Munni*. The undesirable, unacceptable type of blend, *munni jhandu balm hui*, is placed within the more prestigious category of word processing. Coulson has also pointed out that contrast in social values, although difficult to formalize, does often trigger humorous interpretation. In this way, the composition of interactional frames in the blended space creates a tension between a traditional meaning of "balm" and the contextual meaning of "balm" and at the same time it licenses the audience to laugh with the film song. The visual images of seductive film song are so powerful that it assigns a new meaning to *Jhandu balm*. The traditional meaning of balm is substituted and swapped by a new meaning "hot" which sometime extended to "angry". The news caption of Hindi Daily Amar Ujala of February 18, 2011 *netaji badnam hue to Jhandu balm hue* suggests context aided with visuals is a reality space. It creates another layer of

incongruity in conceptual network. In other words, the blended space is counterfactual in relation to the reality space, which perhaps serves to reinforce the overall frame of "enjoyment, pleasure and gratification". Thus, the humor in *Munni Jhandu Balm hui* is created through multiple layers of incongruities; compression of elements with contrasting socio-cultural values, blending of interactional frames. The blend reveals the role of conceptual and contextual aspects of the interaction in the construction of new meaning in everyday interaction.

Finally, the counterfactual nature of the blend is also important in creating a humorous effect. The audience is able to laugh because there is no such thing as Munni jhandu balm hui and because, contrary to the seriousness with which Jhandu balm is portrayed, it is not actually the central focus of the song.

Conclusion

Analysis of two film song examples of category extension based on blending theory reveals several common features of humorous meaning construction. One key feature of the blend is a compression of elements with clashing socio-cultural values. The role of contextual meaning or projection of contrasting interactional frames is also crucial in humorous meaning construction. The blends evoke a delicate balance between frames of self-deprecation/self-mockery and solidarity or co-membership. The blends are also in counterfactual juxtaposition to the reality space. Thus, the theory of conceptual integration brings to light the process of humorous meaning construction that recruits a variety of knowledge frames, and compresses layers of incongruities to create just the right degree of cognitive and social tension that is an essential ingredient of humor.

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