Research Article

A Cognitive Approach to Mental Spaces in English and Kurdish

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Abstract

In this article, mental spaces in English and Kurdish are analyzed. The study investigates the construction of mental space in English and Kurdish in order to identify differences and similarities between the two languages. Examples from both languages are used. The Kurdish examples are taken from rudaw.com and English examples are from every day uses and bbc.com. Mental space builders based on the Fauconnier approach are examined and shown to be effective, including modal verbs, prepositional phrases, negative constructions, and discourse markers. Although each of these components serves as a space builder, the structure of the sentences that contain them varies between the two languages. For instance, in Kurdish negative constructions, the negative element appears at the end of the sentence, delaying the listener's perception of the negativity until the speaker completes the sentence.

About the Journal

1. Introduction

Conceptualization heavily relies on creative abilities rather than being a simple mirror of the universe or a direct or independent derivation of any real circumstance. Consider how imagined beings are conceptualized in the realm of fiction. The " Phoenix bird" associated with Greek mythology cannot be directly understood through bodily experiences because it is not a genuine animal. Creative techniques like mental space creation and conceptual blending are used to establish its conception (Littlemore & Taylor, 2014, p. 12).

Fauconnier (1994) defines mental spaces as: "partial structures that proliferate when we think and talk, allowing a fine-grained partitioning of our discourse and knowledge structures." Mental spaces might mirror the speaker's reality, be intentional or fictitious, or reflect current or potential future situations of the "actual" world. In conversation, every statement, even each content word, reflects and recalls a mental representation of a circumstance. Keeping track of the mental spaces that have previously been opened and those that can be opened at any time helps in discourse management. Each utterance is founded on a fundamental mental space, which is the speaker's point of view, which may or may not be shared by other attendees at the speech event. This is the starting point (or space 0). We can create new spaces in it (p.11). Evans (2006) states that meaning construction, which refers to larger units of language such as sentences and texts, is treated by cognitive semanticists as a process that is inherently conceptual in character. Sentences, in this view, serve as "partial instructions" for the building of sophisticated but temporary conceptual domains, which are put together as a result of continuous speech. These domains, known as mental spaces, are linked to one another in a variety of ways, allowing speakers to "return" to mental spaces created earlier in the verbal encounter (p. 36). As illustration, processing the sentence "Max believes that Susan hates Harry" entails finding or generating Max's belief space and expressing the knowledge that Susan hates Harry in it (Fauconnier, 1994, p.18). Mental spaces, according to Evans et al.,2007 are areas of conceptual space that hold certain types of data. They are built using broad linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural information-gathering methods. Space builders create mental spaces, which can include one or more of the following types of information: an element, a property, or a relation. The creation of mental spaces begins with the creation of a foundation space on which further mental spaces are constructed (p. 18).

Numerous linguists and English scholars like Fauconnier, Dancygier, Sweetser and Harder have investigated mental spaces. Little attention is produced for it in Kurdish. In order to find similarities and differences between English and Kurdish, this study will give a contrastive analysis of mental spaces in both languages. For data analysis, "rudaw.net", "bbc.com" and popular expressions are employed. Based on Fauconnier methodology, the study's focus will be on a few space builders in both languages. An overview of space builders will lead off the study.

2. 2. Space Builders

According to the notion of mental spaces, we continually organize the information at our disposal into useful formats called mental spaces whether we communicate, think, sing, or read poetry and prose. Space builders are the ones that build mental places. Linguistic expressions usually create new spaces, elements within those spaces, and relationships between those elements. A space builder is a linguistic expression that either creates a new space or redirects attention to an existing one. "Space builders" can open up new mental spaces for the speaker or, on the other hand, transport the speaker back to earlier spaces while preparing the listener for a space outside the speaker's immediate surroundings. In other words, space builders both decide how a relationship is created between elements and activate those same elements inside the mind. For instance, the speaker has constructed a mental space

by stating, "Last night, people were rejoicing in Gilkand Park," which consists of two space makers, two elements, and one interface. By utilizing two space builders, the speaker expands the listener's mental space past the current location and time (Szerencsi, 2012, p.266).

Prepositional phrases like (in Lens's mind, in John's head, in 1929, at the factory, from her perspective are space builder. Adverbs like (actually, perhaps, potentially, theoretically), deictic expressions, subject-verb complexes followed by dependent clauses that generate 'belief' contexts after verbs like believe/think/hope/imagine are also space builders. Connectives like if A then ……and extremely culture-specific interjections like (wow, hey, Hurray, oh.) that express strong emotions are all examples of space builders. Sentence adverbials and discourse particles (you know, I mean, well...) that communicate the speaker's personal intents, attitudes, assumptions, and feelings are also good instances of space builders (Szerencsi, 2012).

Table 1: Space builders

	Space builders	Example	Expression
1	Discourse markers	But بەلام	I went to see my friend but I did not see her.
2	Prepositional phrases	In 1999 لە ساڵی نەوەد	In 1999, Sara was 9 years old.
3	Negative markers	Not نە، نا	She did not eat at the table.
4	Conditionals	If, if only, unless ئەگەر، مەگەرئەوەی کە، بەومەرجەی، لە ئەگەری	If I were you, I would hate me.
5	Quantifiers	All, most, some هەموو، هەندەک	The teacher expelled all the students from the class
6	Modals	Will, can بون، توانین، وێران	Kaveh will go to London.
7	Mental actions	Believe, think, imagine بیرکردنەوە، خەیال کردن، باورکردن	Kaveh thinks that Karim is in London.
8	Statements of change	Still, little by little, gradually کەم کەم،	Kaveh's apartment is gradually getting bigger.
9	Literary terms and expressions	once upon a time رۆژەک لە رۆژان	Once upon a time, there was an old man who lived in a cave.

2.1. Discourse markers as space builders

Bezuidenhout refers to discourse markers as "words and phrases like however, but, yet, nevertheless, after all, since, because, so, as a result, etc." which function as viewpoint shifters and space builders. These components direct the listener's attention to the intended contextual effects and lower the overall effort necessary to process the discourse. Information must be inferred from other background information because it is implicit in context. It usually occurs in such a way that "discourse relations tie the content of one utterance to the content of another either as a rationale for, or an elaboration on, or a contradiction of, etc. what has previously been transmitted" (2010, p. 80-81).

Consider the following example;
 • Tom is poor but happy.
In this example the word poor presupposes that a poor one can't be happy. The use of but functions as a "denial of expectation" and cancels the presupposition. The grammatical construction "but" denotes a comparison of two sets of implications. It indicates that the listener should infer a similar but opposing set of assertions from the utterance of the second

clause to whatever statements he was prepared to infer from the utterance of the first clause. Thus "but" builds a space opposed to the base space in which Tom is happy .

Discourse markers in Kurdish language include expressions such as "و، بــەلام، لەگەڵ،تـا" (we, belam, legel, ta), (and, but, with, till) that connect phrases, words and sentences to each other.

- "زۆر سەیرە بەلامەوە کە لەو ڕووداوە ڕزگارم بوو وکاتێک هەستم بە دووکەڵ کرد یەکسەر ماڵەکەم بەجێهێشت، بەڵام تووتییەکەی هاوڕێمم بیر نەچوو و ئەویشم لەگەڵ خۆم برد".

- "/zor seyre belamewe ke lew rûdawe rizgarim bû û katêk hestim be dûkell kird yekser mallekem becêhêşit, bellam tûtîyekeyi hawrrêmm bîr neçû û ewîşm legell xom bird./"

- "It's very strange that I survived incident and left the house immediately when I felt the smoke, but I didn't forget my friend, the parrot, and took it with me.

There are two parts in this illustration. By hearing the first part, a base space in which the speaker left the house without the parrot is constructed in the hearer's mind. However, when the word "bellam" (but) is heard, the listener's mind prepares to enter a new and different space from the base space in which the claim of the first sentence is not true and is canceled. The hearer becomes aware that he also took his parrot with.

2.2 Prepositional phrases as space builders

These types of space builders are mostly groups of prepositions that play the role of adverbials. These space builders include place and time adverbials. One of the space builders is the adverb of place, which by creating a mental space in the listener's mind, helps her easily to understand where and what place the thing or story has happened. This type of space builder creates a specific spatial situation in the audience's mind.

- The Italian navy raises boat that sank in April 2015.

The prepositional phrase in April 2015, when viewed from the present, creates the factual historical space for the boat's sinking.

- Paris-style attacks could "easily" happen in UK cities such as London, Manchester or Glasgow, the Defence Secretary Michael Fallon has warned.

In this example the potentiality space is opened by the modal verb could.

Adverbials of place in the Kurdish language include;

(سەر، ژێر، خوار ، پاش، پێش،لە، لە بن، تەنیشت، چەپ، ڕاست، لەوێ، لێرە،...هتد) .

(ser, jêr, xwar , paş, pêş,le, le bin, tenîşit, çep, rast, lewê, lêre,...htd)

(Above, under, below, after, before, at, under, next to, left, right, there, here…. etc)

- ئەیووب عەلی کۆنسێرتێک لە شاری هولێرساز دەکات .

- /Eyûb 'Elî konisêrtêk le şarî Hulêr saz dekat. /

- Ayub Ali holds a concert in Hawler.

The adverbial of time can act as a space builder and make the audience's mind go to a time beyond the present time. In other words, by using this type of space builder, the listener's mind goes from a time space based on reality to another time space. Space builders of time in the Kurdish language are;

(ئێستا، ئەمرۆ، سبەی، دوای نیوەڕۆ، لەم ڕۆژانە، چەند ڕۆژێکی دی، بەم زوانە، بەهاری ئەمساڵ، جاران، لەمێژە، هەمیشە، لەوساوە،...هتد)

(êsta, emirro, sbey, dwayi niywerro, lem rojane, çend rojêkî dî, bem zwane, beharî emsall, caran, lemêje, hemîşe, lewsawe...htd)

(Now, today, tomorrow, afternoon, these days, a few days, soon, this spring, once, long ago, always, since… etc)

- ئەمڕۆ کاژێر 02:00ی دوای نیـوەڕۆ بە کـاتی هەولێـر کۆبـوونەوەی بەرهەمهێنەرانی نەوتی ئەنـدام لە هـاوپەیمانی ئۆپێـک پڵـس بەڕێوەدەچێت.

  - / Emiro kajêr 02:00î dwayi niywerro be katî Hewlêr kobûneweyi berhemhêneranî newtî endam le hawpeymanîyi opêk pilles berrêwedeçêt. /
  - OPEC Plus oil producers will meet at 2:00 pm Erbil time today.

Emiro (today) is a space builder that creates a new space in which later than now (base space) a meeting will take place.

2.3 Negative Constructions as space builders

When a mental space is generated in the audience's mind, the presence of negative elements may cause that mental space to be disrupted by the opposing environment it produces. The most common negative morphemes in Kurdish are (نه، نا) (ne, na).

- بڕیاریان دا ڕێگە لە(بە) بفرۆشتنی نەوتی رووسیا بە نرخێکی سەرووی 60 دۆلار نەدەن.
  - /Birriyariyan da rêge le froşitinî newtî rûsiya be nrxêkî seruwî 60 dolar neden. /
  - They decided not to allow Russian oil to be sold above $60.

By comparing the Kurdish expression and its English translation, it becomes clear that the disruption of the listener's state of mind occurs earlier in English than it does in Kurdish. This is because in Kurdish, the negative element comes at the end of the expression, and the listener does not anticipate the negativity until the speaker reaches the end of the sentence.

2.4 Conditional expressions as space builders

The predictive conditional is one of the most popular kinds of space-building expressions. Predictive conditionals are sentences like;

- If it rains tomorrow, the game will be cancelled.

They construct spaces, creating a primary conditional space and an alternative space. In the primary conditional space for tomorrow, it rains, and therefore the game is cancelled. In the alternative space, it does not rain, and the game is not cancelled.

An "if-clause" creates a Mental Space that serves as the foundation for the interpretation of "then-clause." For instance, the speaker in "If we leave it open it will be so hot" anticipates that the room would get too warm when deciding whether to keep a window open while away from home. We may say that the speaker is first involved in creating a space of mental content, or a space that is about a potential circumstance in his environment, namely the one where he leaves the window open. The speaker predicts an additional element of the content of this mental space within it, which is further filled out by the participants' and their general understanding of the issue being discussed: it will be so hot. The speaker only foresees this outcome in the context provided by the if-clause. The "if clause" can open an alternative space which is the counterpart of the first space and is mutually exclusive. In this space the speaker does not leave the window open and as a result the room will not get hot (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005, p. 11).

Conditionals can create hypothetical spaces as in;

- "If I was running a car factory, I wouldn't let workers drive the cars home or borrow tools"

The interpretation of this expression is obviously supposed to be speculating about a situation that is not real and runs opposite to what the individuals understand to be the "facts of the issue." The speaker does not have a car manufacturing business. Thus, this statement has a counterfactual interpretation and the created space is a hypothetical (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005, p. 62).

In Kurdish Language the conditionals are created through space builders like;

- (ئەگەر، بەوومەرجەی، مەگەرئەوەی کە، لە ئەگەری)
- Eger, bewmercey, megereweyi ke ،le egerî.
- If, provided that, unless, in the case of.

Every time one of these space builders enters a conversation or discourse, it creates a new conditional-type mental space in the listener's mind.

- ئەگەر شێوازێکی ژیانی تەندروست پەرەپێبدەیت، چێژ لە ژیان وەردەگریت و سەرەنجام دەتپارێزێت.
- /Eger şêwazêkî jiyanî tendrust perepêbideyt, çêj le jiyan werdegrît û serencam detparêzêt./
- If you develop a healthy lifestyle, you will enjoy life and it will ultimately protect you.

This example is divided into two parts, with the first part containing an "if clause." When such sentences are used in discourse, two mental spaces can be created. For instance, for the first part, you can imagine two mental spaces: one where you have a healthy life and another where this is not the case. Similarly, for the second part of the sentence, it is possible to create two mental spaces based on the first part. In one space, you enjoy life while in the other space, this does not happen. The conditional space builder helps the audience by leading them to a new mental space where there is a possibility of the desired event happening or not happening.

2.5 Modals as space builders

Modals can build spaces. For instance, "maybe" sets up a possibility space relative to the base space.

- Ozone layer may be restored in decades, UN report says.

The speaker in this statement creates a possibility space of restored ozone that provides the listener hope that the ozone hole will close. Based on our shared knowledge the damaged ozone is the reality space.

In Kurdish language the modals include; (بون، توانین، ویڕان)

- لە رەشنووسی یاساکەدا ستەم لە ئاوارەکان کرابوو، بەڵام ئێمە توانیمان راستی بکەینەوە و ئەو ستەمە نەهێڵین.
- Le reşnûsî yasakeda stem le awarekan krabû, bellam ême twanîman rastî bikeyinewe û ew steme nehêllîn.
- The refugees were oppressed in the draft law, but we were able to correct it and eliminate that oppression.

"Ême twanîman" (we could) has created an ability space in which the issue is corrected and eliminated while in the base space there was oppression and the refugees were unable to change the situation.

3. Conclusion

Normal speaking and thinking involve mental spaces, connections between them, and linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural strategies for building them. These processes are all taking place in the cognitive background of these activities. The operating rules are straightforward, and seem to apply to all languages. There appears to be only one difference in negative constructions between English and Kurdish. In English, the disruption of the listener's state of mind occurs earlier than in Kurdish. This is because the negative element appears at the end of the expression in Kurdish, and the listener does not anticipate the negativity until the speaker reaches the end of the sentence. The various levels of logic and reasoning in a conversation or text can be organized and structured with the aid of discourse markers, which act as space builders. By indicating connections between ideas and concepts, they aid in fostering coherence and cohesion between various areas of the text or discourse. Prepositional phrases, like adverbs of time and place, establish new spaces that are distinct from reality space and transport the listener to another time and location. Conditionals generate new spaces in which the desired event may or may not occur, whereas modals produce necessity or possibility spaces.

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پوخته

لەم وتارەدا فەزای هزری بە زمانی ئینگلیزی و کوردی شیکاری کراوە. توێژینەوەکە لێکۆڵینەوە لە بنیاتانی فەزای هزری دەکات بە زمانی ئینگلیزی و کـوردی بە مەبەسـتی دەستنیشـانکردنی جیـاوازی و لێکچوونەکـانی نێـوان ئەو دوو زمـانە. نمـوونە لە هەردوو زمـانەکە بەکارهـاتوە. نمـوونە کوردیەکـان لە rudaw.com وەرگیراون و نموونەی ئینگلیزی لەبەکارهێنانی رۆژانە و bbc.com وەرگیراون . بنیاتانەکانی فەزای هـزری لەسـەر بنەمـای ڕێبـازی فۆکـۆنیەر دەکـۆڵرێتەوە و دەردەکەون کە کاریگەرن، لەوانە کرداری مۆداڵ، دەستەواژەی پێشگر، بنیاتـانی نەرێنی و نیشـاندەری گوتـار.. هەرچەنـدە هەریەکێـک لەو پێکهاتـانە وەک بنیاتەری فەزا کاردەکەن، بەڵام پێکهاتەی ئەو ڕستانەی کە لەخۆدەگرن لە نێوان ئەو دوو زمانەدا جیاوازە. بۆ نموونە لە بنیاتانە نەرێنییەکانی کوردیدا، توخمە نەرێنییەکە لە کۆتایی ڕستەکەدا دەردەکەوێت و تێگەیشتنی گوێگر بۆ نەرێنییەکە دوادەخات تا قسەکەر ڕستەکە تەواو دەکات.

ووشه سەرەکییەکان: فەزای دەروونی، بنیاتانی فەزا، دژە راستی، پێکهاتە، مەرجدارەکان.

نهج معرفي للفضاءات العقلية باللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية

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ملخص

في هذه المقالة، يتم تحليل الفضاءات الذهنية باللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية. تبحث الدراسة في بناء الفضاء ذهنية باللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية من أجل تحديد الاختلافات والتشابهات بين اللغتين. باستخدام أمثلة من كلتا اللغتين ومنهج فاوكونير الأمثلة الكردية مأخوذة من rudaw.com والأمثلة الإنجليزية مأخوذة من الاستخدام اليومي و bbc.com.. يتم فحص وإثبات بناة الفضاء الذهني مثل علامات الخطاب، وعبارات الجر، والتركيبات السلبية، والتعبيرات الشرطية، والنماذج. على الرغم من أن كل عنصر من هذه المكونات يعمل كمنشئ للفضاء، إلا أن بنية الجمل التي تحتوي عليها تختلف بين اللغتين. على سبيل المثال، في التركيبات السلبية الكردية، يظهر العنصر السلبي في نهاية الجملة، مما يؤخر إدراك المستمع للسلبية حتى يكمل المتحدث الجملة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المساحات الذهنية، بناة الفضاء، الواقع المضاد، الإنشاءات، الشرطية.