

# A Cognitive Semantic Analysis of Puns in English Advertisements

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## Abstract

**Keywords:**  
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Conceptual Blending  
Theory,  
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The use of puns reveals language wit and advertisers tend to promote their products through using them. Linguistically, puns are one of the forms of wordplay; however, some linguists regard it as a synonym of wordplay. As a rhetorical device, puns innovate the culture of language. The more languages are culturally rich and profound, the more puns are used innovatively. A pun can be regarded as a manifestation of semantic ambiguity. Advertisers prefer to use puns to create the best contextual effects and consequently obtain better economic benefit. The current study aims at, firstly, uncovering the mental processes that underlie the comprehension of puns in English advertisements. The second aim is to analyze the selected puns according to Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) as a model of cognitive semantic approach. The study has chosen 10 examples containing puns in English advertisements. The reason behind choosing these examples is to give a detailed description of how CBT can account for the complexity of puns as a witty use of language and how it can disambiguate and interpret puns in these advertisements. This study is a qualitative content analysis that investigates the usage of puns in the language of advertising. The researchers have concluded that CBT is the appropriate device that can provide a deep analysis of the various types of puns used in English advertisements.



## About the Journal

Zanco Journal of Humanity Sciences (ZJHS) is an international, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, double-blind and open-access journal that enhances research in all fields of basic and applied sciences through the publication of high-quality articles that describe significant and novel works; and advance knowledge in a diversity of scientific fields. <https://zancojournal.su.edu.krd/index.php/JAHS/about>

## 1. Introduction

Language is the primary tool of advertising and puns are one of the rhetorical devices that showcase language wit. The pursuit of using artistic language through using puns by advertisers is to trigger the best contextual effect and consequently achieve economic benefit. Žyško (2017, p 5) states that linguists like Redfern 1985; Delabastita 1996, and Ritchie 2004 consider puns as identical to wordplay on the basis that puns and wordplay are commonly attributed with three features of similarity of forms, ambiguity and humor. Alm-Arvius, Christina and Valera (2003, p 141-142) describe a pun as an intentionally constructed device to achieve special communicative goals. They state that the goal of using pun is usually a humorous one through highlighting the sense of ambiguity into surface and deep message. Language novelty can be advocated through using a pun. For this reason, a pun is widely used in advertisement and even in newspaper headlines depending on the type of the ambiguity it arises. They further state that the use of polysemes and homonyms in puns often relies on systematic principles that figure out how certain expressions are formed in language. Since an expression refers to both individual lexemes and longer syntactic structures, puns include phrases and clauses in a way that it obliges the one who uses pun to violate the rules of language. Puns can be studied from different perspectives like rhetoric, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and cognitive areas. According to Rani, et.al (2023, p 79), puns have two types of ambiguity; lexical and syntactic which are employed to create the sense of humor. Phonological ambiguity is another attribute of puns. On the other hand, Jared and Bainbridge (2017, p 3) assert that puns are prevalent and frequently appear in different registers and advertisement is one of them. Advertisers try to use concise and vivid language with the growth and rapid change of lifestyle. They seek new and attractive forms of advertising to be able to stimulate the desire of the consumers. Puns are artistic uses of language that enable advertisers to achieve their goals with being concise, economical, attractive and persuasive. Punning interpretation requires mental effort and a sense of humor. English advertisers, as explained by Shi (2019, 176), use puns to increase the attractiveness and novelty in their advertisements and consequently increase the purchase behavior by their target audience.

The current study firstly aims to analyze puns in English advertisements from the perspective of cognitive semantics. Secondly, it aims at employing, Conceptual Blending theory by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) as a cognitive semantic model to analyze puns in advertisements. The reason behind the researcher's use of this theory is that it can explain how puns create different mental spaces and how these mental spaces can be blended to show the creativity of language that is used in English advertisements.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Definition and Classification of Puns

According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2009) dictionary in its latest version, a pun can be defined as “a humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest different meanings or applications, or of words having nearly the same sound but different meanings: a play on words.” The Collins English Dictionary provides the definition of a pun as the “use of words that have more than one meaning, or words that have the same sound but different meanings, so that what you say has two different meanings and makes people laugh.” On the other hand, Qiu (2013, p 136) defines puns as an intentional use of a hinge to activate an intended meaning, together with a literal meaning, or of two hinges with similar or identical phonological and/or graphological form to convey two different meanings.’ According to Xiaoli Ghan (2015, p 1211-1212), a pun is a figure of speech deliberately used to confuse the meaning of a word or a group of words to achieve rhetorical effects and create a sense of humor. On the other hand, Alm-Arvius, Christina and Valera (2003, p 141-142) define pun as “a kind of word play that is made possible by the ambiguity of a lexical unit or a longer compositional string”. They believe that punning relies on having polysemy and homonymy and it is used to achieve communicative goals by triggering the sense of humor. Delabastita (1996, p 128) states that puns contrast linguistic structures with different meanings at the time that they are similar in their form partially or completely in terms of homonymy,

homophony, homography or paronymy. Puns depend heavily on the context to understand potential ambiguities and the associative power of words.

It has always been a source of controversy and challenge to classify puns. This is because producing puns manipulates different levels of language like phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic aspects. Another reason is that each language treats puns according to its cultural background, thus, a strong understanding of cultural context is essential to detect puns. Sometimes the production of puns is based on the literature of the language escalating the figurative, rhetorical, and idiomatic exploitations of the language. Authors mostly classify puns differently. As cited in Qiu, (2013, p 136), Vickers (1988) classifies puns into three categories of syllepsis, paronomasia, and antanaclasis. Some authors depend on the type of ambiguity of the puns.

To Delabastita (1996, p 129), puns are textual phenomena and they depend on the structural characteristics of language as an abstract system. Thus, puns should be horizontally and vertically employed. From the horizontal dimension, puns are highlighted by grammatical and semantic devices. Whereas vertically, puns do not physically appear, but they are triggered by the context.

## 1.2 Cognitive Semantic Approach to Puns: Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT)

Cognitive semantic theories have been developed to investigate the relation between language and mind. Systematically, languages are different in mapping concepts that are evoked by words. Each language operates its words to construct meaning, yet they differ in many ways. Some aspects of language seem to be universal and some others are specific (Jurafsky, D. & James H. Martin, 2025, p 263-265). According to Kintsch & Mangalath (2011, p 347) some approaches claiming that words are stored ready-made in the mental lexicon and they are retrieved whenever needed may face problems. These claims cannot find a suitable explanation to find meaning for words in context. Researchers try to find suitable answers for these problems. They search for a suitable framework to account for the richness of word meaning. Lakoff first developed Conceptual Metaphor Theory to study how metaphors work in language. Later, Fauconnier introduced Mental Spaces Theory to explain how humans create and connect mental domains to manage meaning in language. He, then, with Turner contributed to the development of Conceptual Blending which they extracted it from the aforementioned theories (Evans & Green 2000, p 400 -5). Conceptual Blending Theory is the most recent approach of cognitive semantics. The core of this theory, henceforth CBT, is that multiple mental spaces can be blended to emerge new meanings and even novel expressions can be meaningful. According to Fattah (2025, p 3) meaning construction depends on the contribution of linguistic elements such as words, phrases, clauses, etc. He shows that the creativity of human language and even other mental cognitive activities is not only recombining mental spaces, but it entirely generates new logic and new meanings to the concepts. Conceptual Blending Theory is so powerful that can be used in cognitive sciences, literature, AI, and even in marketing, and hence in advertisement. The core of this theory is that inferencing needs five components: mental spaces, blending of these mental spaces, selective projections, the form of the emergent structure, and finally compression and completion of the new concept. Oakley and Pascual (2015, p 7) outline the basic principles and power of CBT to account for meaning construction and discourse phenomena in written, spoken, and multi-modal communication. The basic principle of CBT is to showcase scenes that can best be understood by human beings. It is anything that humans can think, talk, act and operate at a time and place within the range of common sense and experience. According to the principle of CBT, compress whatever is diffuse and decompress whatever is condensed. Oakley, and Pascual (2017, p 423) state that the meaning of the scenes and scenarios as people think and talk emerge from the elements, roles values and relations that exist or form from the mental spaces. Human minds build up meaning through constructing, connecting and integrating these mental spaces. They further demonstrate that when talking about reality, fiction, dream, and even counter factuality, mental spaces are either ontological domains that these elements can be construed, or they are the individual 'world', 'entity', or 'concept' that is built in the mind. When one mentions Shakespeare, Edison, gold, Chemistry or Tarzan mental spaces construct, connect, and integrate concepts, entities, and elements to construe meaning in the individual world. Fauconnier and Turner

(2003, p 58) believe that conceptual blending is a crucial capacity for thought and language. They assert that language, especially grammar, creates and transmits blended schemas.

According to Handl and Schmid (2011, p 1), figurative language is a fruitful area to study the reciprocal relation between language and other cognitive abilities. It is crucial to know that figurative expressions resemble the mirror image of the way the minds of speakers work. Handl and Schmid (2011, p 5) admit that CBT is the only theory that can have the considerable explanation to deal with such new and unusual cognitive construals.

### 2.3 The Use of Puns in Advertisement

A pun is one of the figures of speech which deliberately aims at confusing by using similar words or phrases to achieve a rhetorical effect and create humor. It is a common language phenomenon through which language can rely on the proposed equivalency of words that are orthographically similar and identical in their sounds (homonymy), with different meanings (polysemy), or of a literal meaning with a metaphor.

Delabastita (1996, p 129) believes that besides being bound to the structural features of a language, puns are also tied to the culture of that language. It reflects particular values; tastes, and ways of life. Puns hinge on the cultural background with the witty use of language. To understand the witty use of puns, it is crucial to have a good understanding of the language's lexemes, morphological, syntactic, pronunciation, orthography, expressions, idioms and even proverbs.

Punning, the process of using puns, makes language become more concise, funny, humorous, and creative leaving behind a deep impression on readers with readability and humor. It has many different functions, such as brevity, humor, satire, persuasion, forming riddles and so on. Alm-Arvius, Christina and Valera (2003: p 141-142) describe the process of punning as a process that depends on the occurrence of "polysemy and homonymy in a language, either on the lexical or on the grammatical level." They further describe pun that it is constructed intentionally to achieve special communicative goals usually aiming to create humor through evoking the sense of ambiguity in surface and deep message. Language wit can be revealed through using puns. Hence, they add that puns can serve as a mnemonic device that makes people curious to discover the subject matter. For this reason, puns are widely used in advertisement and in newspaper headlines depending on the type of the ambiguity they arise. The two authors mention various studies on puns and assert that puns can be studied from different perspectives like rhetoric, semantic, pragmatic and cognitive areas. The ambiguity of puns shows the wit of language and reveals the taste of language users and their creative abilities in scrutinizing the sense of humor. According to Žyško (2017, p10) wordplay reveals speakers' creativity through using novel outputs and creating innovations from conventional meanings. The sense of humor is usually created through exaggeration, incongruity, surprise, and absurdity in a way that the addressee or the reader finds difficulty to solve points of ambiguity in search for relevance between the literal and the intended meaning. Žyško (2017, p10) does not agree with Attardo (1994, p 97) who claims that ambiguity is primarily based on homonymy rather than on polysemy or vagueness. He believes that vagueness and also polysemy are the basis of ambiguity as well.

Delabastita (1996, p 138) states that the humorous sense of puns depends on the fact that the addressee is taken by surprise that is different from his/her expectation

As asserted by van Mulken, van Enschoot-van Dijk, and Hoeken (2005, p 708) that in 1994, 10-40% of all ads containing wordplay for advertisers believe that puns help to persuade consumers to buy products. Advertisers seek novel, attractive, concise language for the sake of persuasion which can be found in puns. Besides these features, there are the sense of humor and dual context which are two reciprocal features of pun. The dual or double context, or as some call ambiguity, causes the humorous effect. Yi-bo (2015, p 602) regards ambiguity and double context as two basic characteristics of pun which he believes that they are effective way to attract the audience. Van Mulken, van Enschoot-van Dijk, and Hoeken (2005, p 710) mentioned that puns require additional effort to be processed because they are not like a plain, explicit message. This extra effort is rewarded in the form of extra effect. Crystal (2003, p 405) indicates that the two unrelated meanings

of a single word bring humorous effect and laughter. This entails that attention getting is based on the ambiguity and different interpretations.

### **3. The Framework of Conceptual Blending Theory**

#### **3.1 Conceptual Blending Theory and the Analysis of Puns in English Advertisements**

Analyzing advertisements with puns and other rhetorical devices is usually challenging because they are the extract of language culture and language wit. Their ultimate meaning is far more different than their superficial and direct meaning. Theories of cognitive semantics try to provide a framework of how language works in relation to human thought and perception. Their central focus is to explore the interplay between language, cognition and experience. They provide the insight into how concepts are processed in the mind and how incongruity of humor and other rhetoric expressions is resolved. Within analyzing puns, CBT provides the description of how mental spaces are activated, integrated and blended with words that have multiple meanings.

Conceptual Blending Theory was developed by Fauconnier and Turner in (2002). They derived CBT from Mental Spaces Theory and Conceptual Metaphor. This theory tries to describe the basic cognitive processes that are involved to construct meaning from the emergent structure. Fauconnier and Turner suggest that the elements of more than two input spaces are integrated and blended through partial, cross- space mappings. According to them, the input spaces are mental spaces that contain various information and they are constructed online. Žyško (2017, p 4) states that these mental spaces allow the emergence of a new blended mental space that is activated by background knowledge. There are three mental processes that produce the emergent structure: composition, completion and elaboration. According to Ibrišimović and Pezerović-Riđić (2019, p 93), composition is to blend elements from the input spaces either separately or by fusion. Coulson and Oakley (2001, p 180) state that composition to attribute a relation between elements of the input spaces. Completion is to complete the structure in the blend to match information in the long-term memory. It is the recruitment of background knowledge. Elaboration occurs when simulations of the events in the blend are applied. These processes are operated with the help of a set of vital relations and optimality principles like identity, change, time, space, cause-effect, role, part-whole relations, intentionality, analogy, and other factors that build up theoretical foundation for conceptual blending. This turns CBT as a powerful theory to account to any kind of events, concepts and situations and domains. As cited in Mulahmetović Ibrišimović, A. and Pezerović-Riđić, N (2019, p 94) that Fauconnier and Turner (1998, p63) admit that CBT as a fundamental cognitive operation can be employed in different domains. Advertisement is one of these domains which may incorporate puns or word play to make it memorable and more attractive.

#### **3.2 Core Processes of Mental Spaces in CBT**

Scientifically, as stated by Fauconnier and Turner (2003, p 60), CBT is described in terms of integration network which basically consists of four connected mental spaces; two input spaces, a generic space, and a blended space. The generic space constitutes a structure that is common to the two input spaces and the blended space is formed via selective projections from the inputs. These mental spaces resemble activated neural assemblies and the linkage between these elements correspond neurological binding. This means that mental spaces are built up, interconnected, and blended in the working memory through activating structures from long-term memory. The main types of networks are prototypes that showcases how varieties of meaning like categorization, analogy, counterfactuals, metaphors, rituals, framings, and even construction of grammar are all situated on a continuum to anchor everyday notions of meaning. In the same way, Fauconnier and Turner (2003, p 61) try to show how conceptual blending is operated to deal with highest levels of understanding like scientific concepts, artistic, literary thoughts, elementary levels of understanding and even sentence meaning. Žyško (2017, p 49) calls CBT as the 'many space model' that it allows for many projections between two mental representations. He states that according to (Evans and Green, 2006: 402-409; Handle and Schmid 2011), CBT permeates bidirectional mappings and describes emergent structures which is the description of the sum of more than its parts. This entails

that CBT can deal with creative and even novel scenarios. Pun, as a form of wordplay, is a creative use of language that can better be described by CBT through some core operations. The core processes of CBT to describe and analyze puns are:

1-Creation of Mental spaces: During meaning making, temporary cognitive domains are constructed as mental spaces. They contain all possible information relevant to the situation. These mental spaces allow the mind to organize and process information. They enable individuals to perceive and comprehend any possible situation.

2-The Cross Space Mapping: Related elements in the input spaces connect selectively. This means that only the elements that have related information in the input spaces are connected and aligned. The mappings between the input spaces are based on the interrelatedness of the information and how they are integrated.

3-The Generic Space: It is the abstract space that share related elements between the input spaces to ensure that the inputs are compatible for blending. **Ibrišimović**, and Pezerović-Riđić, N. (2019, p 93) state that there is a bidirectional relation between the generic space and the input spaces.

4-Blending: It is the space where elements of the input spaces blend to create new meaning. This means that the blended space is a novel structure.

5-Emergent structure: It is the new meaning emerged from the shared elements in the input spaces.

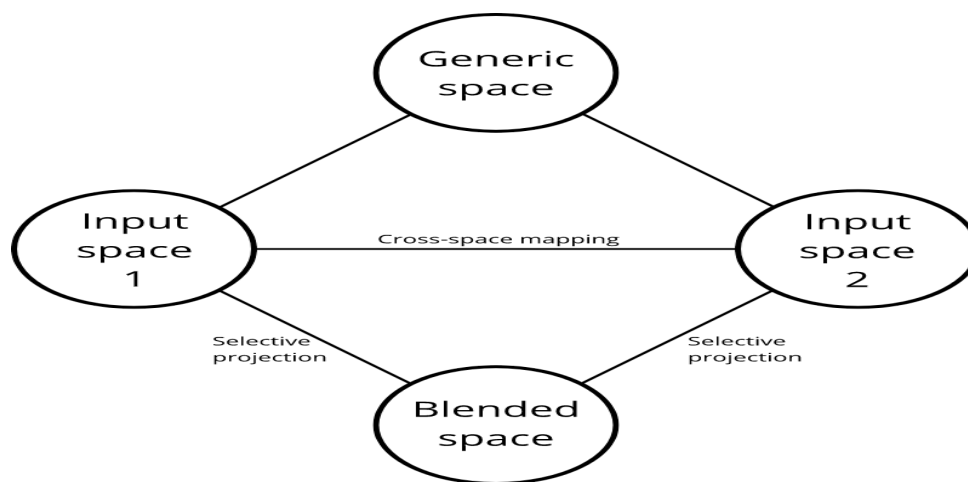


Figure (1) Mental Spaces in CBT

#### 4. Methodology and Data Collection

This study employs a qualitative approach to apply CBT as a cognitive semantic framework to analyze 10 selected English written advertisements. The aim from selecting this sample size is to ensure robust insights into the cognitive dimension of puns in English advertisements and to provide a comprehensive description of the cognitive processes. The examples include different industries and contexts. It features written advertisements as data of the study. The researchers aim to answer the following research questions:

1. How are puns analyzed from the perspective of Conceptual Blending Theory regarding advertisements of English language?
2. What core processes of CBT describe how mental spaces are formed in the mind of the audience to interpret puns?
3. What type of puns do the advertisers most frequently use in the language of their advertisements?
4. Does the use of puns in English advertisements help to promote their products?

### 5. Data Analysis

The researchers have chosen different brands for different contexts, so that their analysis will be different. The samples are listed from 1 to 10 regardless of their chronological sequence.

#### 1. Wayfair brand for furniture, **Way More Than Fair Prices**, (2022) Boston, Massachusetts



**Sample (1) Way More Than Fair Prices- Boston, Massachusetts, August, 2022**

In this advertisement, the brand name ‘way’ and ‘fair’ are used within the tagline to repeat the identity of the brand. Wittily, there is a play on the word ‘way’ that is homophonic with ‘weigh’. From the perspective of CBT, the input space (1) literally has the idea of ‘price fairness’. This input space bears the offer of fairness in pricing. It suggests honesty, equity and good value. Coincidentally, input space (2) manipulates product variety and additional values beyond just pricing. It suggests added benefits and service quality. In the composition process, the shared features between the two input spaces revolve around the idea of ‘reasonable prices’ and the ‘standard notion of being fair’ as well as ‘good qualities’, ‘enhanced services’ and ‘customer satisfaction’. In the compression process, the phrase ‘Way More’ condenses the broader idea of the value that is offered to be far greater than just fair pricing. In the elaboration process, there is the mapping of shared elements fairness of price and values beyond just pricing and the generic space is emerged. The new emergent structure suggests that Wayfair’s intention is to exceed the value of fairness in price. Simultaneously, there is the cognitive shift and an element of incongruity of how the company invites the audience’s satisfaction and the curiosity about what does ‘Way More’ entail.

Input space (1): price fairness

Input space (2): values beyond price

Generic Space: Sharing the concept of honesty in putting prices and the idea of unique qualities that are more important than cost.

Blended Space: To generate the idea that pricing is essential, but there are values that are more important than pricing. Here there is the compression of the two domains to come to the result that both qualities can be found in Wayfair company for furniture

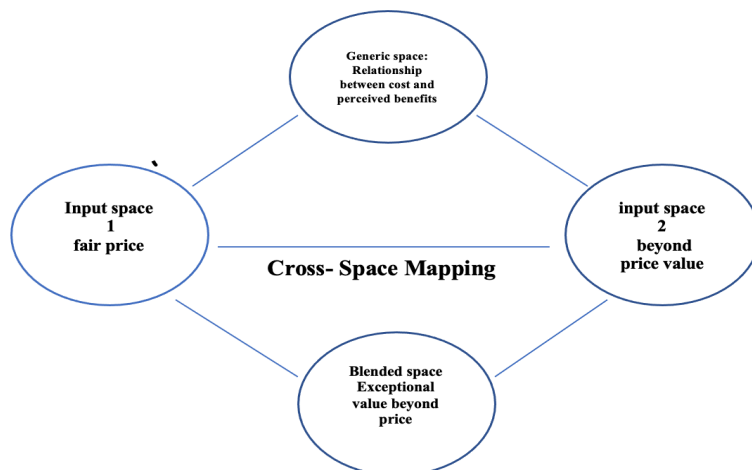


Figure (2) Conceptual Blending Theory's framework for 'Way More than Fair Prices' for Wayfair Company for Furniture

Note: The mental spaces can be drawn for each advertisement, but the researchers would rather try to avoid repeating presenting a figure for each advertisement.

2. Nestle Company- KitKat Chocolate bar- **Have a break Have a KitKat**-York, England, March, 2024



**Sample (2) Nestle Company a chocolate-covered wafer bar- York, England, March 2024**

In this slogan '*Have a Break, Have a KitKat*', the advertisement plays on the word 'break' which is homonymous to 'to break the chocolate bar in half' and the metaphorical meaning of 'break' 'to pause' which is synonymous with 'to take a rest'. The literal meaning of 'break' in mental space (1) is a physical action of breaking the chocolate bar into two pieces, while in input space (2), there is the idea of 'having a rest' after a continual working or performing a daily activity. The idea of the break in input spaces (1) and (2) differs according to the type of the context. The meaning of 'break' in input space (1) revolves around the composition of the chocolate bar, its shape, size and texture; however, the context of input space (2) is about the workplace. The process of completion starts whenever the two mental spaces share their similar features and merge a new mental space which is the emergent space in a bidirectional relation. The availability of the shared elements between the mental spaces allows the blended space to elaborate the idea of having a KitKat as a chocolate bar means to have a rest after a hard work and enjoyment of the nice taste and the sound of breaking the bar. Within the framework of CBT, mental spaces are as the following:

**Input space (1)**

break: literal meaning: to cut the chocolate bar into pieces  
context: the structure of the chocolate bar  
aim: to have pleasure with tasting and breaking

**Input Space (2)**

break: metaphorical meaning: take a rest  
context: the workplace  
aim: to relieve from stress and hard work

**Generic Space**

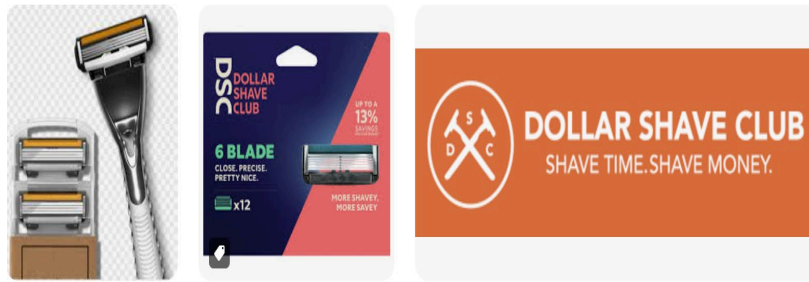
The shared element between the two input spaces is to have a rest by breaking KitKat chocolate bar.

**Blended Space (the emergent structure)**

There is the blend of the two ideas; taking a break and enjoying breaking KitKat with the good taste and the sound of breaking.

In the Generic Space, there is the process of compression in the two domains of the two input spaces. The Emergent structure is generated and composed by the completion of the two ideas, so there will be a blend of the two domains, physical and psychological, in the blended space. Hence, the blended space holds the strong connection between taking a break after a hard work with eating KitKat and enjoying the sound of breaking the chocolate bar and tasting its nice taste.

### 3. Dollar Shave Club- Shave Time, Shave Money- April, 2014, U.S



Picture (3) Dollar Shave Club- Shave Time, Shave Money- Venice, California, U.S., April, 2019

The 'Dollar Shave Club' wittily advertises with the expression 'Shave Time, Shave Money'. It is a novel use of language that makes the audience remember and enjoy it. It is simple but reinforces the brand's effective way on its due focus of being convenient and affordable. The advertiser repeats the word 'shave' for more than a reason; the first one is that it connects the aim of the ad to the name of the company. Besides this, there is the play on the word 'shave' which literally differs from its metaphorical meaning. The word 'shave' is a homographic pun in the form of imperative verb to urge the audience for faster decisions. The message is direct and stick in memory by repeating the word 'shave' which provides features like rhythmic, motivational call to action, and humor to the ad.

The following description frames the cognitive aspect of how puns can be interpreted from the perspective of CBT:

Input space (1) is composed from the literal meaning of the word 'shave' which means 'to razor, 'trim' or 'cut' hair with the use of a razor as an instrument. Input Space (2) is constructed from the metaphorical meaning. It can be said that it may be based on the metaphorical proverb 'Time is Money' to show the importance of time during shaving. This entails the sharpness of the edge of the razor and how it trims time duration spent in shaving. So, it compresses the two input spaces and generates the emergent structure through mapping the shared elements between them. As a result, the blended space elaborates the message that triggers to take the action of using products of 'Dollar Shave Club' for their efficacy and valuable services.

#### Input Space (1)

Literal meaning: 1. to cut hair  
2. to use razor as a tool

#### Input Space (2)

metaphorical meaning: 1. shave = save, reduce  
2. time and cost reduction

#### Generic Space

Trimming hair, time and cost by using this company's product. Shared elements are the concepts of efficacy, value, saving time, and money are linked to using the service or the product.

#### Blended Space

Emergent meaning: the product and the service help consumers simultaneously obtain time and financial achievements.

It is worth to mention that the word 'shave' has the same sounds as 'save'. They differ only in [ʃ] and [s] sounds. Authors like (Ali, M. 2019, p 176) regard this as paronym in which two words are the same but differ in one sound to arise the sense of humor.

#### 4. Warburtons- It Butter Be Warburtons, England, Sept. 2023



Sample (4) Warburtons Holdings Limited, England, Sept., 2023

In this advertisement, there is a play on the word ‘butter’ to achieve two aims. Firstly, it uses ‘butter’ deliberately to sound the like ‘better’ except in the vowel [ʌ] and [ɛ] in order to attract the attention of the audience and create a humorous effect. Secondly and most purposefully, to remind the audience that Warburton produce all the products that are related to the theme of bread and how to enjoy with buttering it and even the butter is within the Warburton’s brand. This ad suggests that if it is about buttering and enjoying bread, it must be Warburtons. According to CBT, the input space (1) subsumes the use of ‘butter’ for ‘better’ as if it is the comparative degree of ‘good’ to refer to the name of the company. This is a creative and novel use of language to create humor as well as double context or ambiguity. Hence the idea of ‘What is better?’ is compressed with no other choice than ‘Warburton’s products’ in input space (2). Then, the two ideas compose the emergent structure through mapping the elements like ‘Warburton is better’, ‘butter the bread’ ‘Enjoy spreading butter on bread’ and ‘Enjoy Warburton’s butter and bread’ that are shared between the two input spaces. The blended space is generated and the emergent structure elaborates that ‘it is better to have Warburton’s tasty products tying the enjoyment of spreading the tasty butter on the tasty bread with the name of ‘Warburtons’

Below is a brief description of the analysis of this ad according to CBT:

##### Input space (1)

Butter: in the place of ‘better’  
butter as a product of Warburtones  
A soft thick-texture made from  
Plant oil

##### Generic Space

Connection between overarching  
the quality and brand trust and the joy  
of spreading butter on bread

##### Input Space (2)

taste and quality of Warburtons’  
products

##### Blended Space

it is better to use Warburton’s bread  
and butter which have the best qualities  
and enjoy spreading butter.

#### 5. John Deere- Nothing runs like a Deere- USA, 2022

The company’s name is John Deere which is an American corporation for manufacturing agricultural machinery. The ad fosters the speed and qualifications of Deere’s machines. There are two witty and humorous play on the words ‘Deere’ which heads the article ‘a’ as if it is the noun phrase ‘a deer’ and the word ‘runs’ as its verb.

The brand name ‘Deere’ is homophonous with the word ‘deer’ which is related to the type of the animal that runs very fast. In input space (1) there is the brand name ‘Deere’ whereas input space (2) composes the counterpart word ‘deer’ which is homophonous with it. The shared elements mapped between the two mental spaces are ‘agility’ and ‘speed’ and ‘the reliable machinery’ to

emerge the new meaning ‘the reliable machinery that has the features of speed and agility and compress them in the emergent structure. Consequently, the blended space associates these features to the Deere brand and elaborates the purpose of using the name ‘Deere’.



Picture (5) ‘Nothing runs like a Deere’, John Deere, USA, 2022

The mental spaces are elaborated as follows:

### **Input Space (1)**

The brand name ‘Deere’  
An American corporation for  
agricultural equipment and  
manufacturing like shovels  
tractors, and farm machines

### **Generic Space**

Association of the brand  
name ‘Deere’ to the speedy animal

### **Input Space (2)**

the animal ‘deer’  
speed and agility

### **Blended Space**

Deere’ equipment and machines  
are superior in speed, agility and  
high qualifications

The second case of word play is on the word ‘run’. It is a homonymic pun that has the same pronunciation and spelling, but two different unrelated meanings. In both cases, it is a verb. It could either mean the action of ‘going faster than a walk with springing steps’ or the action of ‘operating or managing a machine’. From the perspective of CBT, in input space (1) there is the verb ‘run’ with the meaning ‘fast steps’ like a deer. Input space (2) holds the idea that ‘Deere’ company can manage in a good way. Mapping the shared elements between the input spaces, there is the completion of the idea of ‘managing all the affairs in a speedy way like a deer’. Hence, in the blended space, there is elaboration of the idea that ‘Deere company can manage your affairs through supplementing you with machines that are fast, eligible and manageable’.

### **6. McDonald’s ‘Beware of Pickpockets’, USA, 2018**

In this advertisement, there is a humorous play on the compound noun ‘pickpacket’ that sounds like ‘pickpocket’ and purposefully is preceded by the verb ‘beware’ as a kind of warning of thieves. The ad invented this noun to refer to fries as if they are very fast and ready to be picked and eaten at any time. The scenario is invented on the idea that the packet of the fries is usually stuck out of a commuter’s backpack. So, the ad suggests that these fries are so valuable, for its taste and flavor, that one should be careful from pickpockets who may steal the packet of the fries.



Picture (6) ‘Beware of Pickpackets, McDonalds, Australia, 2022

McDonalds ads are witty and creative because of their experience in their services. This ad ‘Beware of pickpackets’ draws a scenario about fast food fries in packets and connects it with pickpockets. In input space (1), there is the concept of warning is composed about fried food in packets that are likely to be stolen. The term ‘pickpacket’ is created by this ad to sound like ‘pickpocket’ in input space (2). McDonalds is the provider of fast food which are put in the branded paper packets with the letter ‘M’ on it. The core pun is on the word ‘pickpacket’ which is paronymous with ‘pickpocket’ with difference of only one vowel sound. The cross-space mapping between the input spaces in the emergent space completes between the elements of a stealing food packets and stealing from pockets. The blended space emerges after generating the emergent structure to elaborate the idea of taking as a thief in a criminal and negative context and paralleling it with taking a snack packet as a playful and positive context. In the blended space, there is the new idea that McDonald’s snacks are irresistible and tempting that one may steal these snack packets like a pickpocket.

The mental spaces can be framed as the followings:

**Input space (1)**

Pickpackets (an invented word by McDonalds)

**Emergent Space**

To match pickpackets to pickpockets in the point of food packets being taken.

**Input Space (2)**

pickpockets (thieves)

**Blended Space**

McDonalds whimsical tone about caution from pickpockets

**7. Sustain Organization- We knead Your Dough- Bankers for Bakers, UK, Feb., 2024, by Real Bread Campaign**



Sample (7) ‘We Knead Your Dough’ by Real Bread Campaign, Bankers for Bakers, 20<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2024, UK

Sustain Organization called banks for a campaign in Feb, 2024 to support bakers making delicious, real bread and nutritious bread with the expression ‘We knead your Dough’ and ‘Your Dough-nation’. There is a play on the words ‘knead’ and ‘doughnation’. Originally, this ad is based on the

idiom 'Need your dough' in which 'dough' means 'money'. The word 'knead' is homophonous with 'need' and 'doughnation' is homophonous with 'donation'. It is a smart call for support ad. The word 'knead' means 'to make or paste dough', but it is used in the place that fits the context of 'need'. Input space (1) initiates the word 'knead' that has the meaning 'to make or paste dough with hands'. According to 'doughnation' in input space (1), it carries the meaning of 'donation' which means 'to give for charity'. Input Space (2) displays the meaning 'to have the necessity of' to the word 'knead' accounting for its pronunciation and context. Meanwhile, it compensates for the missed meaning of 'doughnation' which can refer to the process of making dough by hand'. The features that can be shared between the two input spaces are; 'We need your dough', 'We need real bread', 'We make your dough', 'Donate your dough', 'We need bread with healthy and nutritious qualities', 'together we make better bread', 'With better bread, we and you support donation of bread with good qualities', 'Support better bread for our community and even for our planet'. To map the shared features from the input spaces, the emergent space generates and completes the idea 'Let us make a better bread and donate it'. From this space, there will be the blend of the aforementioned meanings and the new meaning in the blended space elaborates the deliberated use of the words 'knead' and 'doughnation'. The summary of the CBT processes and mental spaces is shown below:

### Input Space (1)

Knead: to make dough

Doughnation: the process of making dough

### Emergent Space

Make the bread better

### Input Space (2)

need: necessity for something

Doughnation: sounds like [done to donate

### Blended Space

call for better bread and donate i

## 8. Kraft Heinz's Salad Dressings- Lettuce Count the Ways, Canada, May, 2024



Sample (8) Kraft Heinz's Salad Dressings- Canada, May, 2024

After 2015, Kraft and Heinz merged for the production of new and unique food dressings rolling out a wide range launches of flavor. The new brand seeks innovations of premium dressings and marinades made with no preservatives, artificial colors and flavors. The advertisement expression is based on a romantic poetry by Elizabeth Browning 'How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.' There is a play on the word 'lettuce' as a homophone to the combination 'Let us' which is usually written with the contracted form 'let's'. Here, creativity arises from the simplicity of the use and purpose. According to CBT, there is the sense of humor with the use of 'lettuce' while it is intended by the advertiser to focus on the main ingredient of the salad. Ambiguity arises with this word because it is homophonous with 'let us'. Another interesting point is that the verb 'count' and 'the ways' collocates side by side to form the idea of 'suggesting to count the ways of adding flavor to the food in different ways'. In input space (1), there is the context of salad and its major ingredient 'lettuce'. There is also the suggestion of making different salads with different flavors. In input space (2), there is the suggestion to count the ways by having the verb 'let' combined with the pronoun 'us' in the contracted form 'let's' which is homophonous to 'lettuce'. The idea of having

'lettuce' as an important ingredient of making salad emerges in the emergent space because of 'count the ways' to refer to the new ways of adding new dressings for salads with lettuce. Hence, the blended space merges the two contexts and elaborates the ultimate goal of the brilliant ad emphasizing on using Kraft-Heinze's salad dressings. The advertisement smartly invokes humor through playing on the word 'lettuce=let us' in order to create memorable and engaging context.

### **Input Space (1)**

Lettuce: vegetable, healthy food, freshness,  
The concept of counting ways and types

### **Input Space (2)**

The verb 'let' and the pronoun  
'us' to sound as /letəs/ (sounds like  
"lettuce")

### **Emergent space**

Variety of ways for  
making different tastes  
lettuce as the main ingredient

### **Blended space**

Kraft-Heinze's salad dressings  
innovate different new tastes  
using fresh healthy ingredients

## **9. Mountain Dew- Do the Dew- PepsiCo, U.S, 2024**



Sample (9) Mountain Dew- Do the Dew- PepsiCo, U.S, 2024-2025 Campaign

This is an advertisement of a soft drink of citrus soda originated in U.S and is internationally popularized. At first sight there is no pun, but when 'dew' is pronounced according to American accent, the two words 'do' and 'dew' appear as homophones. The brand slogan puts the two words in parallel to emphasize the value of this drink. Accordingly, CBT can provide the best sketch to analyze the relation between them. In input space (1), the word 'dew' refers to the soft drink and the word 'do' refers to action. Input space (2) associates 'do the dew' to 'do the do'. the two input spaces compose different elements in two domains. The elements like 'drinking soft drink', 'doing something', 'doing an activity', 'doing an activity for excitement' and 'referring to the brand's name DEW' are all generated from the two input spaces in the emergent space as a kind of completion process. Mapping the shared elements from the mental spaces, finding the link between drinking the 'mountain dew' drink and acquiring energy and practicing an active and adventurous lifestyle are elaborated in the blended space.

### **Input Space (1)**

Do: activity, action  
Dew: brand name,  
drops of water produced  
on plants during nighttime

### **Input Space (2)**

'do the dew' is parallel to  
'do the do'

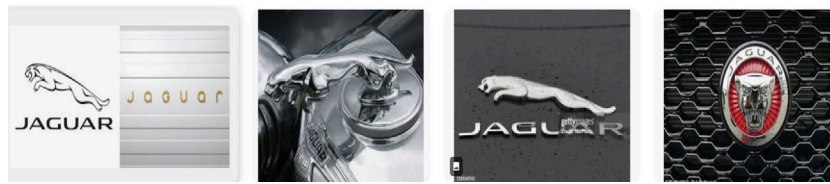
### **Generic Space**

Drinking Mountain Dew  
Doing adventurous actions

### **Blended Space**

Mountain Dew refreshes you  
and gives you extra energy

## 10. Jaguar-A British Luxury Automobile- Own a Jaguar at the price of a car, November, 2024



Sample (10) Jaguar-A British Luxury Automobile- Own a Jaguar at the price of a car, November, 2024

In this advertisement, there are two puns. The ad plays on the two words; 'Jaguar' and 'car'. The word 'jaguar' has a double context. Firstly, it refers to the large cat-like wild animal with thick-brown fur in Central and South America. It is known for its speed and strength. On the other hand, 'Jaguar' represents the luxury, premium quality, high status and expensive car. For this pun, there are two contexts; the context of strength, power and high speed that is seen in that animal which is composed in input space (1). The other context is a sporty, stylish luxury car with aerodynamic design that combines comfort, performance, speed and power. This context is composed in input space (2). The two contexts are compressed to search for relatable features and build a cross mapping mental space of emergent space. Consequently, through blending these mental spaces, the blended space elaborates that the Jaguar brand for car has the features of luxury, prestige, powerful engine, high- speed, high-status expensive sports car. The following sketch cognitively frames the mental spaces drawn by CBT:

### Input space (1)

jaguar: a general noun for a cat-like animal that is known for its power, speed, wild, elegance and strength

### Emergent space

The features related to the animal are found in the car that is named 'Jaguar'

### Input Space (2)

Jaguar: a brand name for a British luxury, aspirational stylish, high quality, prestigious car

### Blended space

The prestigious strong and stylish British sport car is worth to be owned for its power, speed and royalty

The advertiser wittily uses another pun on the word 'car' to redefine 'affordability'. There is a play on this word to create a double context for the types of cars; those which are prestigious and non-affordable and the other is normal in price. In input space (1), the word 'car' refers to a regular car that its price is affordable and normal people can buy it. For the composition of meaning in input space (2), the context of Jaguar is expected to be expensive and unattainable. There is a compression of the idea of equating the prices in the generic space. Blending these mental spaces through cross-mapping the shared elements, the blended space elaborates repositioning Jaguar as an attainable and affordable car.

### Input Space (1)

Car: a regular car with affordable price

### Generic Space

Jaguar 'car' is valuable  
High quality  
Royalty in status  
Can be purchased  
as an ordinary 'car'

### Input Space (2)

Jaguar car: expensive, usually normal people cannot afford it

### Blended Space

reframing luxury as accessible  
equating the price of Jaguar car with an ordinary car to redefine affordability

## 11-Results and Discussion

The data used in the current study are chosen from different brand products which contain puns as a rhetoric device the language of advertisement. The products are about furniture, chocolate bar, shaving instruments, bread-butter-biscuit products, agricultural machinery, fries, bread-dough campaign, salad dressings, soft drink and luxury car. Throughout analyzing, the researchers have come out with some essential points to be discussed. One of these points is that advertisers usually seek a novel and clever type of language that can catch the audience's attraction and stay long in their memory. The intention to include the brand name or part of it in the slogan or the advertisement, advertisers incorporate the brand name or elements of it within the advertisement or the slogan. In 'Wayfair' brand, for example, the advertiser includes the words 'way' and 'fair' as two key words to remind the audience of the brand name and play on the word 'way'. Other examples are 'KitKat', 'Warburton', 'Deere', 'Dew', and 'Jaguar'. It is a successful way to help consumers to recall the brand and keep them in their long-term memory. Another aim of the advertisers in using puns is to create double context either through using homophones, homonyms, puns based on compounding or puns based on idioms. In 'Way more than fair prices', the word 'way' is homophonic with 'weigh'. Coincidentally, 'Deere' is homophonous to the word 'deer', 'pickpackets' is homophonous to 'pickpockets', 'knead' is homophonous to 'need' and 'lettuce' is homophonous to the combination 'let us'. The word 'jaguar' can be regarded as a homonym of two unrelated words 'the cat-like animal' and 'name of a car brand'. These are good examples to conclude that mostly advertisers build their puns on homophony as a witty use of language to cause ambiguity and the audience make different interpretations. Meanwhile it is used to implement a light-hearted humor that catches their attention. Other types of puns are used, but less frequently. So, sometimes they use a word as a homonym like 'Jaguar' for two different meanings and some others rely on an idiom or proverb to build the pun on. An example for this is 'We knead Your Dough' which is based on the idiom 'knead your dough' which means 'Make money'. It is worth to mention that some advertisers invent novel words like 'doughnation', 'pickpacket' that sound similar to other words or combinations like 'donation' and 'pickpockets.' The researchers noted that advertisers try to use simple, easy recognizable words that convey clear and direct meanings at the first glance, but when the words are matched to their context, they bear different meanings. Hence, cognitively processing these ads with puns in the minds of the audience is not a straightforward process. The mental spaces are built according to cognitive domains that include all the information needed to construct meaning. The information that is related to another domain is cross mapped to generate another mental space that is called 'the emergent structure' which is later blended to construct the blended space. Fauconnier and Turner (1995, p 4) state that the blended space is less or more than the two input spaces. It is less because it takes only what is related to the actual or the intended meaning leaving the unrelated information. Meanwhile, it is more than the two input spaces because it holds all the details related to the new meaning. The process of blending is a general cognitive operation that involves categorization, making hypothesis, inferencing and combining them within grammatical constructions. Ibršimović and Pezerović-Ridić (2019, p 103) state that Fauconnier and Turner (1998, p 63) find that CBT is a 'fundamental, indispensable cognitive operation routinely employed in a variety of domains' and they further admit that CBT has been applied in the analysis of different cognitive and linguistics phenomena. Among these domains is advertisement which is not easy to pin down for its complexity. Conceptual Blending Theory which is also called Conceptual Integration Theory is a multi- space framework with bidirectional cross-space mapping between the mental spaces which makes it too powerful for the construction of meaning for even difficult domains like advertisement. To analyze an advertisement, especially those with puns, a conceptual of networks is built through processing the information into the input spaces. There, a cross-space mapping between the shared elements is integrated and blended to construct the meaning intended by the advertiser.

## 12-Conclusion

The current study is an analysis of puns used in English advertisement from the perspective of cognitive semantics conducting the framework of CBT as a tool for the analysis. The main goal of this study is to focus on the process of construction of meaning as well as comprehending puns used in English advertisements of different brands.

1. Cognitive semantic analysis takes all the cognitive circumstances into consideration and save them in the mental spaces for the construction of meaning.
2. The study hypothesized that Conceptual Blending Theory is the most suitable tool to analyze puns. Analyzing puns is challenging and not every theory has the ability to deal with the complex cognitive domain of puns because puns are not straight forward. They require more mental effort.
3. Puns are usually the extract of language wit that is tied to the culture of that language. The dual context and the sense of humor are two fundamental features of puns that are intended to achieve communicative goals. With these two features, puns can serve as mnemonic devices that make the audience curious to discover the intended meaning.
4. Advertisers widely use puns to create a humorous ambiguity with the use of various types of puns like homonyms, polysemes, homophones, homographs, ...etc.
5. Advertisers usually use puns to make the language more concise, attractive, and persuasive that gives a positive attitude to stimulate their audience.
6. Conceptual Blending Theory, developed by Mark Turner and Gills Fauconnier (2002), is based on the principle that meaning of scenes and scenarios emerge from the elements, roles, values and relations between the mental spaces and there are three processes; composition, compression, and elaboration that take place in these mental spaces.
7. Mental spaces compress whatever is diffuse and decompress whatever is condensed. Consequently, meaning is built up through constructing, connecting and integrating these mental spaces. Handl S. and Schmid (2011, p 5) admit that CBT is the only theory that can provide the considerable explanation to deal with new and unusual cognitive construals like puns and other rhetorical devices.
8. English advertisement contains puns in different ways depending on the type of puns they use and the context of brands. Based on the analyzed samples, the researchers conclude that English advertisers mostly try to create a relation between two different domains depending on some valuable features of the domain literally announced to link them to their brand name. Another concluding point is that they depend on some frequent phrases, expressions and idioms and put them on their brand name. The researchers also conclude that some English advertisers invent new words that sound like real existing words to attract the attention of their audience. Finally, the researchers conclude that the most frequent types of puns used in English advertisements are homophonic, homonymic puns and puns based on idioms and popular phrases.

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### Links of the sample examples:

- Wayfair: Available at: <https://www.wayfair.com/about>
- Kitkat-nestle: available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQIKoSjpS2w>
- Dollar Shave Club <https://www.facebook.com/DollarShaveClub/videos/760912033953525/>
- Warburtons- It Butter Be Warburtons, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwBUnabkHxA>
- John Deere- Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leGN4hhAwP4>
- McDonalds- Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srep1nJqoo>
- Sustain Organization- [https://www.sustainweb.org/realbread/bakers\\_support](https://www.sustainweb.org/realbread/bakers_support)
- Kraft Heinz- Available at: <https://www.foodbev.com/news/kraft-heinz-introduces-new-salad-dressing-brand-in-canada>
- Mountain Dew official site campaign- Available at: <https://www.mountaindew.com/news/mountain-calling-do-dew>
- Jaguar official site's rebranding campaign- Available at: <https://www.jaguar.com/copy-nothing/index.html>

## شيكارى سيمانتيكى مهبرى فى تهوريه له ريكلامى زمانى ئينگليزى

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### پوخته

به كارهيئانى تهوريه زيرهكى زمان دهردهخات و نهو كهس ولايه نانهى كه ريكلام دهكهن زياتر پهره به كالاكانيانه وه ددهن له ريگه ي به كار هيئانى تهوريه له ريكلامه كانيانه وه. له روى زمانه وانپه وه، هه نديك زمانه وان تهوريه به شنيوازيك له (يارى به وشه) داده نين. به لام هه نديك نووسه به هاوواتايه كى يارى وشه سه يرى دهكهن. وهك نامرازىكى پوهانبيژى، يارى وشه كان كلتورى زمان نوى دهكهن وه. هه رچه ند زمانه كان دهوله مندتر و قولتر بن له روى كلتورييه وه، زياتر يارى وشه كان به شيويه كى داهينه رانه به كارده هينرين. يارى وشه دهكرت وهك دهركه وتنى ليلى واتايى سه ير بكرت. ريكلامه كان بينان باشتره يارى وشه كان به كارهيئانى بؤ دروستكردى باشترين كاريجه ريهه كلتورييه كان و له نه جامدا سوودىكى ئابوورى باشتر به ده سته بينن. نهو ليكولينه وهيه ئامانجيه تى، يه كه م، پروسه هزريه كان كه له بنه ماي تيگه يشتنى يارى وشه كان له ريكلامه ئينگليزىيه كاندا هه ن بكوليتته وه. ئامانجى دووم بريتيه له شيكاركردى يارى وشه هه ليژيردراوه كان به پينى تيورى تيگه لكردى چه مكى (CBT) وهك مؤديليكى ريبازى سيمانتيكى مه برى. ليكولينه وهكه 10 نمونه ي هه ليژاردوه كه يارى وشه له ريكلامه ئينگليزىيه كاندا له خوده گرن. هوكارى هه ليژاردنى نهو نمونانه بريتيه له بيدانى وه سفىكى وردى نه وهى چؤن CBT ده توانيت پوونكرده وه بدات له سه ر ئالوزى يارى وشه كان وهك به كارهيئانى زيره كانه ي زمان و چؤن ده توانيت يارى وشه كان له م ريكلامانه دا پوون بكاتوه و ليكيان بداته وه. نهو ليكولينه وهيه شيكارى ناوه پوكى جو ريه كه ليكولينه وه له به كارهيئانى يارى وشه كان له زمانى ريكلامدا دهكات. تويزه ران گه يشتونه ته نهو نه جامه ي كه CBT ئاميزىكى گونجاوه كه ده توانيت شيكارى قوول بؤ جو ره جياوازه كانى يارى وشه كان كه له ريكلامه ئينگليزىيه كاندا به كارها تون، دابين بكات.

### تحليل دلالي معرفي للتورية في الإعلان الإنجليزي

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### المخلص

يكشف استخدام التورية عن براعة اللغة ويميل الاعلاميون إلى الترويج لمنتجاتهم باستخدامها. لغوياً، التورية هي أحد أشكال التلاعب بالألفاظ، ومع ذلك، يعتبرها بعض المؤلفين مرادفاً للتلاعب بالألفاظ. كأداة بلاغية، تُحدث التورية ابتكاراً في ثقافة اللغة. كلما كانت اللغات غنية وعميقة ثقافياً، زاد استخدام التورية بطريقة مبتكرة. يمكن اعتبار التورية مظهراً من مظاهر الغموض الدلالي. يفضل المعلنون استخدام التورية لخلق أفضل التأثيرات السياقية وبالتالي الحصول على فائدة اقتصادية أفضل. تهدف الدراسة الحالية، أولاً، إلى الكشف عن العمليات العقلية التي تكمن وراء فهم التورية في الإعلانات الإنجليزية. والهدف الثاني هو تحليل التورية المختارة وفقاً لنظرية المزج المفاهيمي (CBT) كنموذج للمنهج الدلالي المعرفي. اختارت الدراسة 10 أمثلة تحتوي على تورية في الإعلانات الإنجليزية. والسبب وراء اختيار هذه الأمثلة هو تقديم وصف تفصيلي لكيفية تفسير نظرية المزج المفاهيمي لتعقيد التورية كاستخدام بارع للغة وكيف يمكنها إزالة الغموض وتفسير التورية في هذه الإعلانات. هذه الدراسة هي تحليل محتوى نوعي يبحث في استخدام التورية في لغة الإعلان. وقد خلص الباحثون إلى أن نظرية المزج المفاهيمي (CBT) هي الأداة المناسبة التي يمكن أن توفر تحليلاً عميقاً لأنواع المختلفة من التورية المستخدمة في الإعلانات الإنجليزية.