

UDC 811.111'373.72

Original scientific paper

Received on 30.10. 2007.

Accepted for publication 28.11. 2007.

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## **Conceptual Integration Theory – the key for unlocking the internal cognitive choreography of idiom modification**

The paper represents an attempt to reveal the internal choreography of idiom modification. It is argued that modified idiomatic expressions can be explained using the postulates of the Conceptual Integration Theory. Optimality principles and vital relations, proposed by Fauconnier and Turner, clarify and regulate the relations within the conceptual integration network. The main aim of this paper is to analyze the extent to which vital relations and optimality principles at work in conceptual integration can account for mechanisms of idiom modification.

**Keywords:** idiom modification, conceptual integration theory, optimality principles, vital relations.

### **1. Introduction**

The aim of the present paper is to examine the applicability of the Conceptual Integration Theory in the analysis of modified idiomatic expressions. Previous studies of idiom modifications have not provided a coherent answer to the question to what extent an idiom can be modified to retain the link with the original phraseological unit so that recipients can recognize it as a modification of an established original. This paper represents an attempt to analyze the extent to which vital relations and optimality principles at work in conceptual integration can account for mechanisms of idiom modification. After a theoretical overview of the Conceptual Integration Theory, we will present a set of case studies in

which we will test the degrees to which this theory can be used in the analysis of different types of modified idiomatic expressions.

## 2. On Conceptual Integration Theory

Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 17) claim that “conceptual framing has been shown to arise very early in the infant and to operate in every social and conceptual domain.” Conceptual integration theory, proposed by Fauconnier and Turner and further developed by Coulson and Oakley, gives insight into our way of thinking, creating and understanding the world around us. This theory deals with both linguistic and non-linguistic blends. According to Coulson and Oakley (2000: 184), blending theory is applicable not only to many levels of analysis, but it also presents a way of establishing connection between our understanding of language and the way we comprehend human thought and activity in general.

Conceptual blending is a basic mental operation, which is essential for the simplest kinds of thought and conceptual integration is an unconscious activity embedded in every aspect of human life (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 18). Blending developed from the mental space theory proposed by Fauconnier (1994). It was initially designed to deal with the question of indirect reference and referential obscurity, but it has been proven that this theory can also tackle different kinds of semantic and pragmatic phenomena. However, Coulson and Oakley (2003) note that conceptual integration principle is ‘reminiscent of Miller’s (1957) concept of chunking, as well as its more formal incarnation in Anderson’s (1983) ACT-\*model’. Chunking is actually a process in which one is able to absorb a great amount of information by connecting it to “knowledge representations in long term memory.” Coulson and Oakley (2003) point out that “Fauconnier & Turner’s insight in blending theory is that comprehenders can ‘chunk’ information by relating it to various juxtapositions of partial structure from multiple domains.”

Creating an integration network is a process which, according to Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 44), “involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backwards to inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend.” Establishing mental spaces, connections between them and blended spaces gives us global insight, new meaning and human-scale understanding.

Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 40) define mental spaces as “small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding

and action.” They furthermore add that mental spaces consist of elements that are usually structured by frames. Mental spaces are connected with each other and can be modified as thought and discourse change. Mental spaces are often used to divide and organize incoming pieces of information within the referential representation (Coulson and Oakley 2000: 177). Different spaces contain different information on the same elements, but each space contains a representation that is logically organized (Coulson and Oakley 2000: 177). Elements within one mental space usually have counterparts in other mental spaces. They are connected with the set of correspondences. These correspondences are referred to as mappings and they are developed from different kinds of relations, including change, identity, time, and space.

Linguistic cues or deductive markers give the listener important information when to divide referential structure and between which elements mappings can be established. Grammatical information cannot completely explain meaning construction operations, since the same grammatical structures can be used to form different mental spaces configurations (Coulson and Oakley 2000: 177). Fauconnier (quoted in Coulson and Oakley 2000: 178) claims that ‘meaning construction relies on an elaborate system of “backstage cognition” to fill in details not specified by the grammar’. Background knowledge, general cognitive abilities and information obtained from the discourse context can be used to explain meaning construction operations.

Blends and mental spaces can be represented in the form of a diagram, in which circles represent mental spaces, points in the circles represent elements and lines stand for connections between elements in different spaces. Lines in the diagram represent neutral coactivations and bindings.

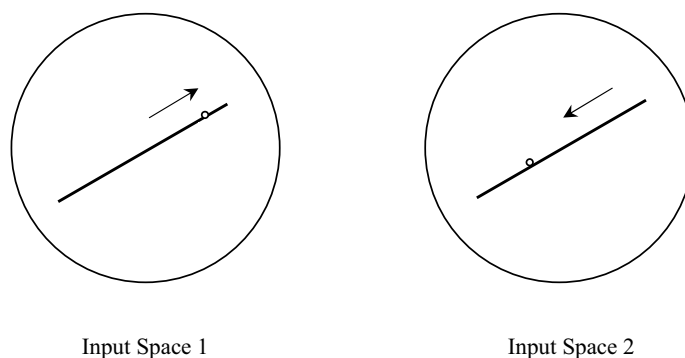


Figure 1. Input mental spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 2002)

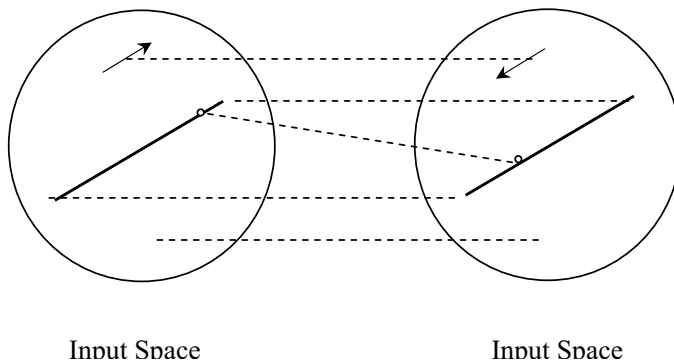


Figure 2. Cross-space mapping (Fauconnier and Turner 2002)

Conceptual integration network consists of minimum two input spaces, one generic space and one blended space, and there is also a cross space mapping which connects counterparts in the input spaces. Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 40) add that “such counterpart connections are of many kinds: connections between frames and roles in frames, connections of identity or transformation or representation, analogical connections, metaphoric connections, a more generally, ‘vital relations’ mappings...” A cross-space mapping is created when matches between the spaces are constructed. However, the network model of conceptual integration can consist of several input spaces and also of multiple blended spaces.

According to Coulson and Oakley (2000: 179), blending analyses involve several stages. First, an example that hypothetically involves blending is introduced. Then follows a description of conceptual structure in each of the spaces that form the conceptual integration network. This involves describing the structure in the input and generic spaces and establishing mappings between elements. Finally, the structure in the blended space is described, paying special attention to which aspects of its structure originate from each of the inputs.

The generic space maps onto each input space and characteristics that the inputs have in common are incorporated in the generic space.

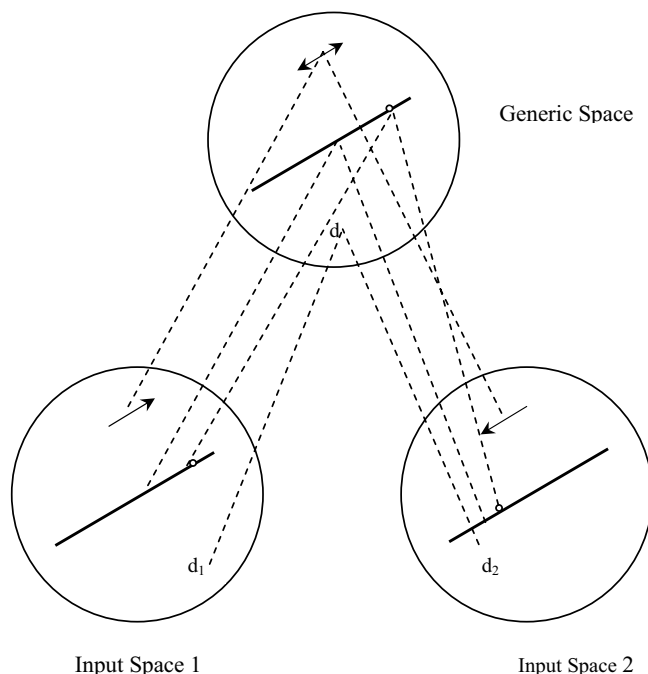


Figure 3. Generic mental space (Fauconnier and Turner 2002)

The blended space is the forth mental space in the network. It develops the emergent structure that is not present in the inputs. The blended space is connected to the generic space. The generic structure present in the generic space is incorporated in the blended space. The blended space also contains structures that cannot be found in the inputs. It is the composition of elements that makes relations that do not exist in the inputs possible in the blend. Fauconnier and Turner (2002:20) claim that “finding correspondences that look as if they are objectively there requires the construction of new imaginative meaning that is indisputably not there’.”

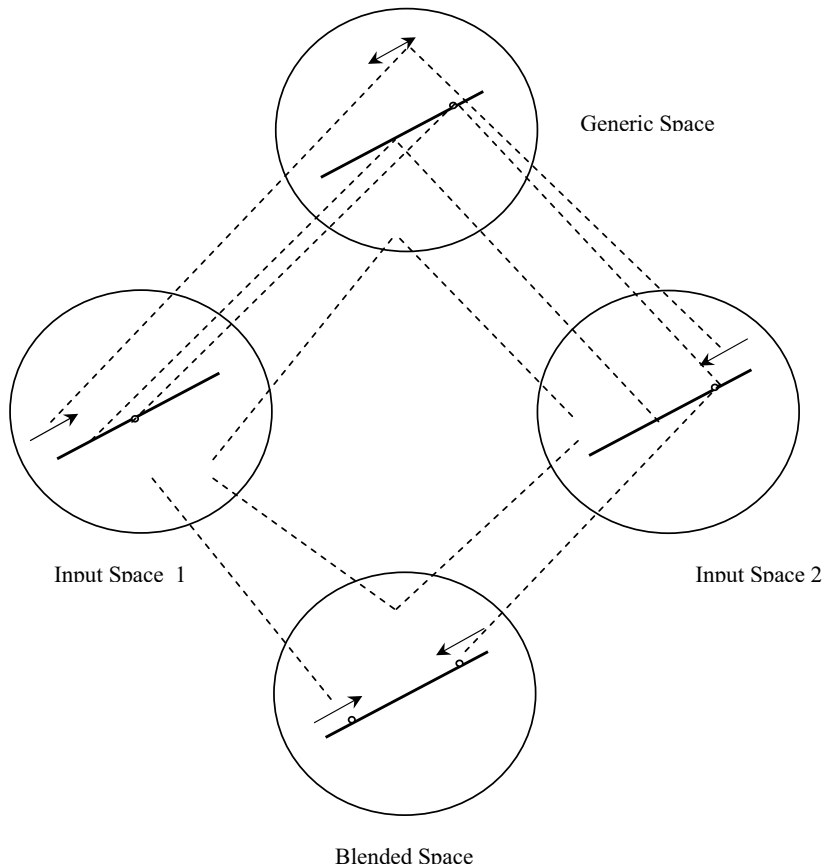


Figure. 4 Blended space (Fauconnier and Turner 2002)

It is important to clarify the differences between the emergent structure and the structure present in each of the inputs. Clarifying the differences between these structures, according to Coulson and Oakley (2000: 180), “justifies the claim that conceptual blending gives rise to the emergent structure that frequently sustains reasoning.” Emergent structure is a result of three blending processes: composition, completion and elaboration. Composition is a blending process in which a relation from one mental space is ascribed to an element or elements from other input spaces. As Coulson and Oakley (2000: 180) put it, “the emergent structure arises from contextual accommodation of a concept from one domain to apply to elements in a different domain.” There are geometrical regularities that govern the network and Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 44) point out that “... anything fused in the blend projects back to counterparts in the input spaces.”

Completion is a blending process that takes place when information in long term memory is matched to the structure in the blend. According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 43), completion raises additional structure to the blend and when this structure is added the blend is integrated. Veale and O'Donoghue (quoted in Coulson and Oakley 2000: 181) claim that completion can be carried out by using the process of spreading activation through a semantic network. They define a semantic network as "a model of conceptual structure in which concepts are represented as hierarchies of interconnected concept nodes." In order to get from one concept to another, activation would have to spread through part or parts that represent relations between concepts. Veale and O'Donoghue further claim that three problems that occur in the comprehension of metaphors, as well as other kinds of blends, can be solved by using process of spreading activation.

Elaboration is closely related to completion. Running of the blend or its elaboration modifies the blend. During the elaboration, links to the inputs are preserved, and Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 44) add that "...all these 'sameness' connections across spaces seem to pop out automatically, yielding to a flash of comprehension..." They further claim that this flash will take place only if counterpart links are unconsciously preserved. Elaboration usually entails mental or physical simulation of the event in the blend. Coulson and Oakley (2000: 181) distinguish coupled and decoupled elaboration. They claim that little or no physical realization is involved in decoupled elaboration. Coupled elaboration can form action blends in which activity patterns from one domain are applicable to elements from another domain.

### 2.1. *Vital Relations*

Behind the possibilities for conceptual blending, there is an entire system of interacting principles. In order to explain one of the products of this system, it is necessary to tackle the entire system. This system rests on conceptual compression, which has an effect on a set of relations strongly influenced by shared social experience and fundamental human neurobiology. These relations are also referred to as vital relations. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) distinguish the following vital relations:

1. **Change:** a vital relation that connects one element to another element and sets of elements to other sets; mental spaces are not static, and because of that this vital relation can be present within a single mental space.

2. **Identity:** a product of complex, unconscious work; despite their differences, mental spaces are connected with relations of personal identity; objective resemblance and shared visible characteristics are not criteria for identity connections across spaces; it is not obligatory for the identity connectors to be one-to-one across spaces;
3. **Time:** a vital relation connected to memory, change, understanding the relationship of cause and effect;
4. **Space:** a vital relation that brings inputs separated in input spaces into a single physical space within the blended space;
5. **Cause–Effect:** a vital relation that connects one element, as a cause, with another element that counts as its effect;
6. **Part–Whole:** a vital relation that fuses part–whole mappings across spaces into one;
7. **Representation:** it is possible for one input to have a representation of the other; in the conceptual integration network one input corresponds to the item represented and the other to the element that represents it;
8. **Role:** within the conceptual integration network one element, as a role, can be connected to another element that is regarded as being its value;
9. **Analogy:** a vital relation that connects two different blended spaces that through blending obtain the same frame structure;
10. **Disanalogy:** a vital relation that is based on Analogy; Psychological research has shown that people find it much more difficult to tell the difference between two things that are completely different than between those that are similar in some way;
11. **Property:** an inner-space vital relation that links certain elements with their property; an outer–space vital relation of some kind is compressed into an inner space vital relation of Property in the blend;
12. **Similarity:** an inner-space vital relation that connects elements with properties they have in common;
13. **Category:** an inner-space vital relation that links elements with categories they belong to; Analogy as an outer-space vital relation can be compressed into an inner space vital relation of Category in the blend;
14. **Intentionality:** a vital relation that includes vital relations connected with hope, desire, fear, memory, etc.; this vital relation is extremely important, because our every action, thought, feeling is based on relations it applies to;
15. **Uniqueness:** a crucial vital relation because many vital relations are compressed into Uniqueness into blend.



## 2.2. *Optimality principles*

Gibbs (quoted in Coulson and Oakley 2000: 186) claims that “blending theory runs the risk of being too powerful, accounting for everything and explaining nothing.” However, Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002) suggest a set of optimality principles that further clarify the relations within the conceptual integration network. They claim that under these principles blends function most efficiently, but also point out that satisfying one of these principles does not automatically involve satisfying another one.

These principles include:

1. **Integration:** the blend is regarded as being an integrated unit and it can only be manipulated as such;
2. **Web:** the web of suitable mappings to the input spaces must be preserved in case of manipulation of the blend;
3. **Unpacking:** the blend can permit the reconstruction of the entire network;
4. **Topology:** relations of the elements in the blend should be connected with the relations of their counterparts in other spaces;
5. **Good reason:** every element in the conceptual integration network must be connected to other spaces and it must have a significant function in running the blend;
6. **Metonymic tightening:** when elements that are metonymically related are projected to the blend, their metonymic connections decrease the distance between them.

According to Coulson and Oakley (2000:186), these principles limit the spectrum of possible blending analyses and make the conceptual integration theory less arbitrary.

## 3. Analysis

### 3.1. *On corpus*

The corpus comprises 100 examples of idiom modifications collected from magazines, such as *Time*, *The New Yorker*, *The Economist*, *National Geographic*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*. 20 examples were collected from general reading and the electronic media. 15 examples were obtained from the British National Corpus (BNC). The reason for including such a limited number of

idiom modifications from the BNC lies in the fact that some registers rich in idiom modifications are poorly represented in the BNC.

The examples are divided into 10 categories,<sup>1</sup> depending on the type of the modification they exhibit. These categories are:

### Structural modification:

1. **Formal blending**<sup>2</sup> is “the amalgamation of two phraseological units into one modification, in which the phraseological units share a lexeme that serves as a link” (Omazić 2003: 90). For instance: *Why does she cook the goose that lays the golden eggs? (cook somebody’s goose, kill the goose that lays the golden egg)*
2. **Clipping** is referred to as omitting of one or more constituents of idiomatic expressions. For example: *Well, it just has not happened, and when they have decided on a theme, it has been so late at night that Ministers have not been told,’ said one disgruntled insider. Such disillusion and frustration came to the fore last Saturday. A group of strategists, led by Saatchi, demanded a rethink. There were too many cooks, they said. (Too many cooks spoil the broth.)*
3. **Permutation**, according to Omazić (2003: 88), “refers to the switching of positions between elements of the canonical form of a phraseological unit.” For instance: *Never do today, what you can put off for tomorrow. (Never put off for tomorrow, what you can do today)*
4. **Reconstruction** is referred to as “total structural change of a phraseological unit form” (Omazić 2003: 91). They share the same lexical composition with the original phraseological units, but they differ in structure. *There was more fun as an underdog and since he had more bark than bite it was a casting that suited the irascible old gentleman ideally. (his bark is worse than his bite)*

### Lexical modification:

5. **Addition** refers to ‘either premodification, postmodification, or insertion of one or more elements into the canonical form of a phraseological unit’

<sup>1</sup> The categorization is taken from Omazić (2003), but it is adjusted to our corpus, since we included only those types of modification that we registered in the corpus.

<sup>2</sup> Omazić uses the term blending for these modifications. However, we decided to use the term formal blends in order to avoid confusion with the blending theory.

(Omazić 2003: 84). For example: *He cleared his throat and tossed back the wine red as blood in his goblet. (as red as blood)*

6. **Substitution** is referred to as ‘the replacement of one or more constituents of a phraseological unit’. Substitutes and the substitution partners are involved in various semantic relationships: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, paronymy, but lexemes can also be semantically unrelated. For example: *Thus the genius of songwriters has been brought to bear on writing a gospel more suited to our age when a baby is born with a plastic spoon in its mouth. (to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth)*

**Mixed types** that exhibit both structural and lexical modification:

7. Permutation and Clipping
8. Addition and Clipping
9. Substitution and Clipping
10. Substitution and Reconstruction

All governing principles must be satisfied for the blend to run successfully. Unlike governing principles that all must be present in the blend, it is not likely that all vital relation will be present in particular blend. It is argued that both vital relations and governing principles can account for idiom modifications. A set of vital relations and governing principles, suggested by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) are tested on selected examples to see which vital relations and governing principles are present and therefore regulate the relations within the conceptual integration network.

### 3.2. Formal blending

- (1) *That chill in the air: there were black clouds moving over from the left. My Walkman! He can't have thrown away my Walkman! OK it had the batteries stuck in with sticky tape, but it kept me going through fifteen Agatha Christies and hundreds of hours of revision well, pretend revision. I thought, Don't know about a wild goose chase, this is a lame duck chase.*

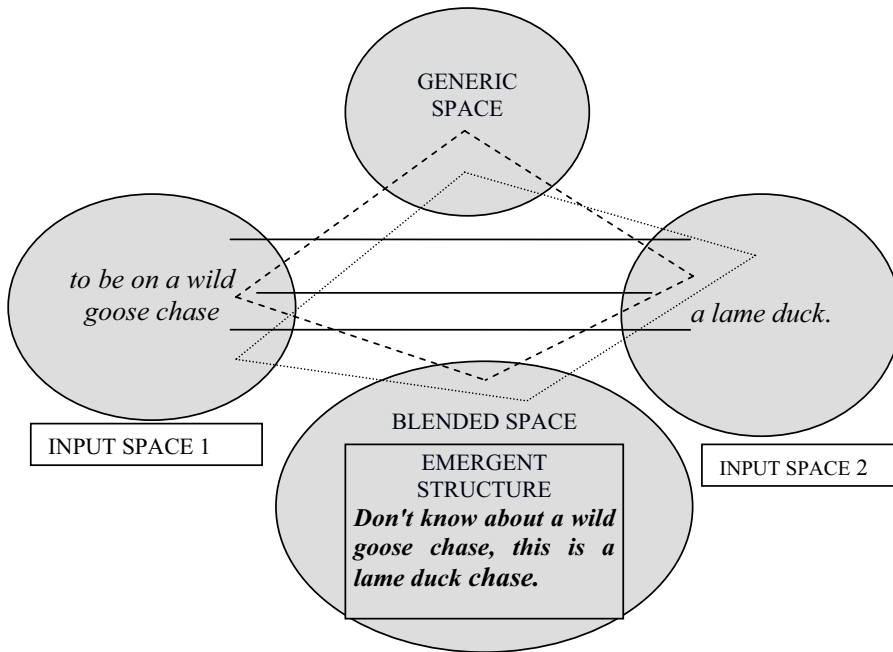


Figure 5. Conceptual integration network for *Don't know about a wild goose chase, this is a lame duck chase.*

In input space one, we have the idiom *to be on a wild goose chase*, and in input space two, we have *a lame duck*. These two input spaces are connected by the vital relation of Similarity (a solid line in the diagram). In the case of *a wild goose chase*, we have something that has a little chance of being found, because you have been given incorrect information. *A lame duck* is something that is not successful and needs to be helped a lot. *A wild goose chase* and *a lame duck* are similar because both represent something that is not likely to succeed, although the reasons for the lack of success are different. It is also possible to claim that two input spaces are connected via the vital relation of Disanalogy (a solid line in the diagram), since *a wild goose* is something that is difficult to catch, while on the other hand *a lame duck* is unable to walk properly because of damage to one or both of their legs. It is probably easy to catch *a lame duck*, but it is also less challenging experience than catching *a wild goose*. Inputs are also connected via the vital relation of Category (a solid line in the diagram), because both goose and duck belong to the category of feathered animals. The blended space inherits the idiom structure from input space one, as well as the lexical projection from input space two (dotted lines in the diagram). The blend is well-

integrated and it can be manipulated as a single unit. Every element in the network is significant and linked to the elements in other spaces.

The diagram in Figure 5 illustrates the conceptual integration network for the modified idiomatic expression *don't know about a wild goose chase, this is a lame duck chase*. The circles represent mental spaces, the solid lines indicate vital relations, the dotted and dashed lines indicate connections between inputs and generic and blended spaces. Emergent structure within the blended space is represented with the solid square.

### 3.3. Clipping

- (2) *Don't count your chickens*
- (3) *A stitch in time...*

Although this type of modification is very common, especially in newspaper headlines, we presume here that clippings do not appear to be instances of blending. Therefore we cannot use Conceptual Integration Theory to account for these modifications. These modifications cannot be considered as instances of blending, because they do not satisfy governing principles. All governing principles must be met in order to claim that a particular example is the occurrence of blending. Clippings embrace only one input space and therefore do not satisfy constitutive principles. However, the other side of the coin is the possibility that these clippings represent single scope networks, because Fauconnier and Turner claim that single-scope networks are actually typical examples of conventional source-target metaphors and that the framing input, is often called the “source”, while the input that is focused on understanding, the focus input is referred to as the “target”. Clippings can be viewed as metonymies in which part stands for whole and the part prompts for the whole and therefore it would be possible to view clippings as single scope networks.

### 3.4. Permutation

- (4) *Never do today what you can put off for tomorrow.*

The emergent structure within the blend inherits the structure *don't x tomorrow, what you can x today*, as well as selective salient projections from input space two, which embraces our knowledge of people's organizational skills. Input space one and the emergent structure within the blend are connected via the vital relation of Disanalogy. The scenario from input space one and the one in the

blend are diametrically opposed. Basically, what is considered as recommendable in input space should be avoided in the blend. Elements in the blend are linked with their counterparts in input spaces and therefore satisfy the Relevance principle. The blend is closely integrated and can be manipulated as a single unit, which means that the Integration principle is met. Blend prompts for the reconstruction of the entire network and therefore satisfies the Unpacking principle.

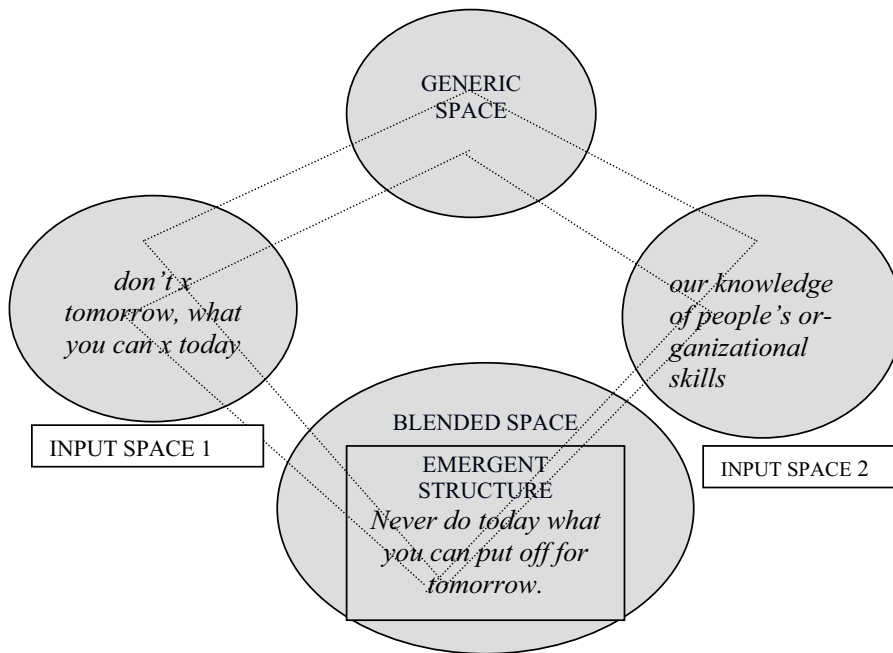


Figure 6. Conceptual integration network for  
*Never do today what you can put off for tomorrow.*

### 3.5. Reconstruction

- (5) *Then we shall return to judging people on their merits. It's already started in America, where they were just as mad about the Russians as the British. Last year the Entertainment Corporation, Russian ballet's most devoted promoter, went bust. It had made the fatal error of overkill. Americans suddenly got fed up with all these Russians who weren't Nureyevs. The golden goose became a turkey.*

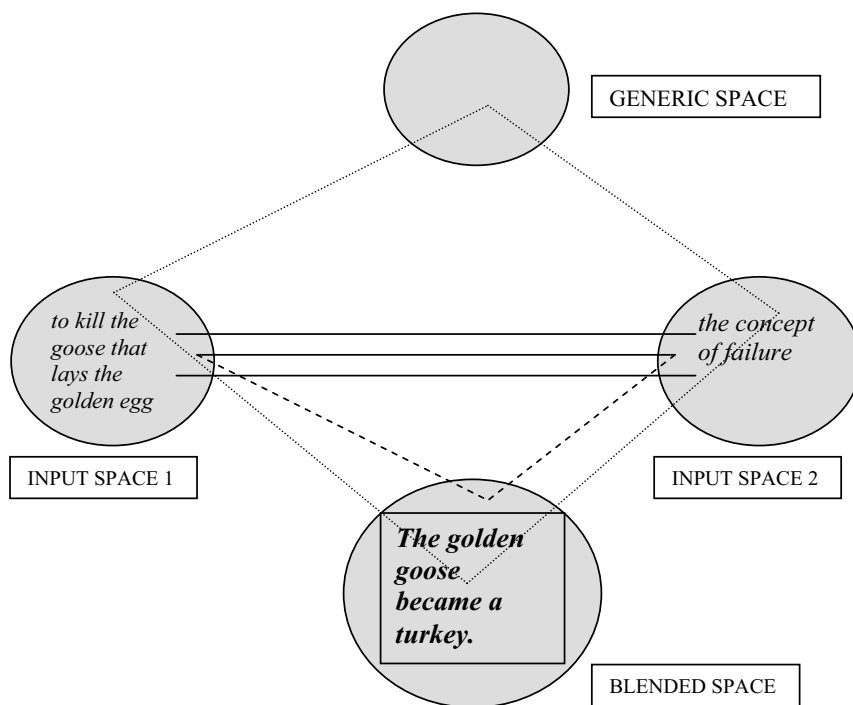


Figure 7. Conceptual integration network for *The golden goose became a turkey*.

In this four space network one input space is the idiom *to kill the goose that lays the golden egg*, where the goose is viewed as a source of income. The second input involves the concept of failure. The vital relation of Category connects these two inputs, because both turkey and goose are feathered animals. Input spaces are connected by the vital relation of Disanalogy and Representation, because we have *the golden goose*, which is viewed as something valuable and *the turkey*, which represents something that turns out worse than expected. In the blend Disanalogy is compressed into the vital relation of Change, because the golden goose, as something that brings you a lot of money, changes into the turkey, which represents an investment that yields disappointing results. The emergent blend is closely integrated and it is possible to manipulate it as a single unit. Elements in the blend retain their connections to their counterparts in other spaces.

### 3.6. Addition

- (6) *At the same time many working people have had their belts tightened for them as factories closed and unions accepted cutbacks. For these people*

*going into debt is not a way to finance newer extravagances but the only way to maintain a lifestyle they have been brought up to accept as theirs by right. When the going gets tough, the tough allegedly go shopping, and into debt.*

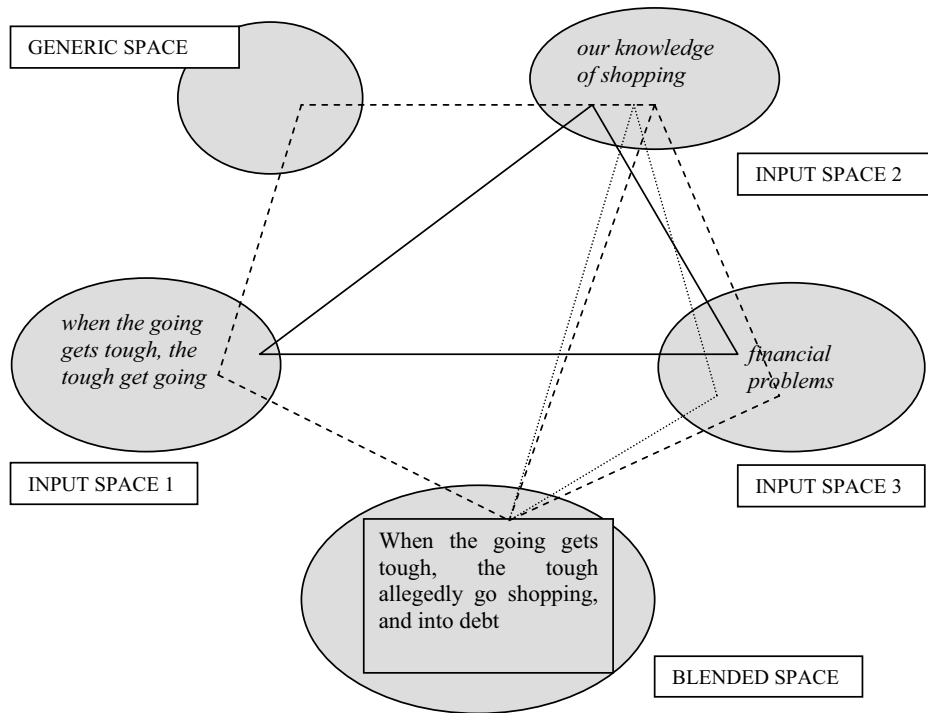


Figure 8. Conceptual integration network for *When the going gets tough, the tough allegedly go shopping, and into debt.*

In this five-space network input space one involves the idiom *when the going gets tough, the tough get going* (selective projections from the input space one are represented with the dashed lines in the diagram). Input two embraces our knowledge of shopping (selective projections from the input space two are represented with the dashed lines in the diagram). Input space three involves financial problems (selective projections from the input space three are represented with the dashed lines in the diagram). Input spaces are connected via the vital relation of Cause-Effect (the solid lines in the diagram). Shopping is viewed as a sort of therapy that lifts our spirit and makes us feel better, it is presumed that after we reward ourselves we will be able to find a way out of the difficult situation. This vital relation is compressed and intensified in the



blended space, since a difficult situation is seen as the cause of shopping, while shopping is the cause of financial problems. The blend also embraces the vital relation of Change (a dotted line in the diagram), because the effect of shopping changes from something that gives us pleasure to ending up in financial crisis, which may be greater than the one that was the cause of shopping in the first place. The blend is well integrated and can be manipulated as a single unit. It prompts for the reconstruction of the entire network. Every element in the blend is connected to its counterparts in input spaces.

### 3.7. Substitution

- (7) *Are you telling me that there is a politician in this country who does not have a blue dress in his closet?*

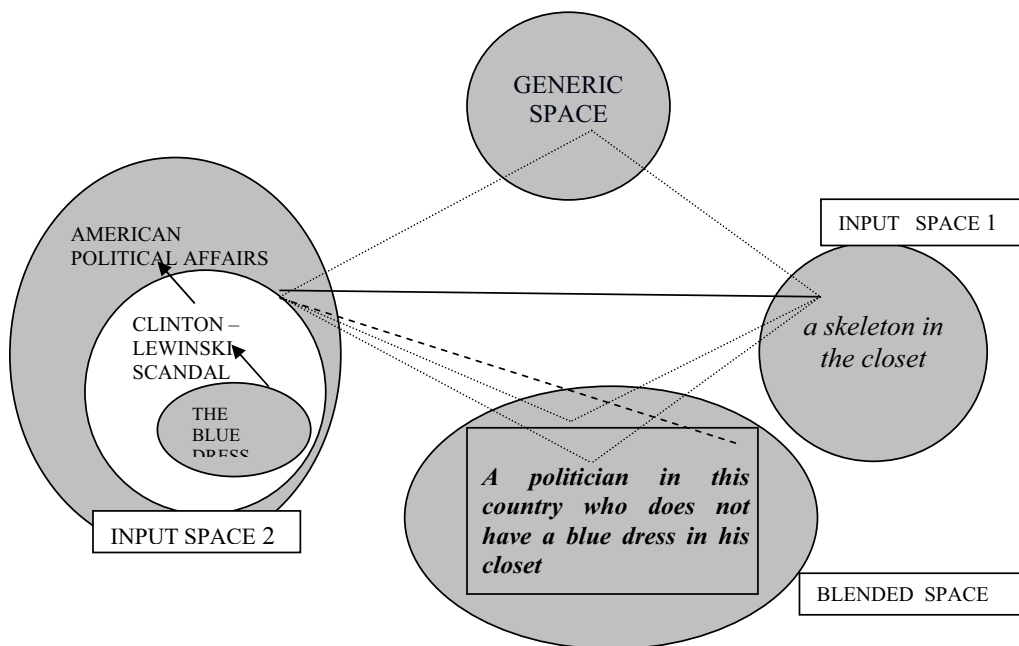


Figure 9. Conceptual integration network for *Are you telling me that there is a politician in this country who does not have a blue dress in his closet?*

In input space one, we have the idiom *a skeleton in the closet*, and in input space two, we have American political affairs, which embrace Clinton affair and *the blue dress*. Within input space two, we have double metonymy, PART FOR WHOLE, since Clinton affair stands for American political affairs and the blue dress stands for the Clinton-Lewinski sex scandal. This vital relation is also

compressed in the blend, but within the blend the blue dress does not stand for a specific scandal, but for American political affair in general. Input spaces are connected by the vital relation of Representation since both skeletons and the blue dress represent secrets that should remain hidden. This emergent structure inherits the idiom structure from input space one, as well as lexical projections from input space two. Elements in the blend match their counterparts in other spaces. The blend is tightly integrated and can be manipulated as a single unit.

### 3.8. Mixed types

Unfortunately, we cannot afford a full coverage of every type of modification registered in corpus that exhibits both structural and lexical modification. So we decided to include the most vivid example of this type in which substitution and addition is displayed.

(8) *A handkerchief in time saves nine and helps to keep the nation fit.*

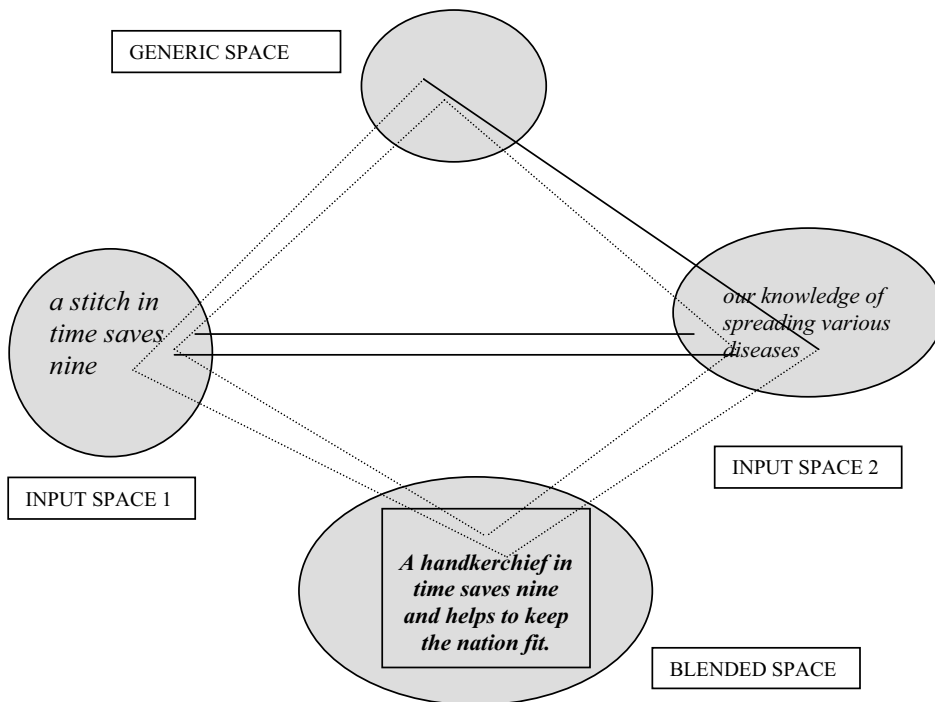


Figure 10. Conceptual integration network for *A handkerchief in time saves nine and helps to keep the nation fit.*

The proverb *a stitch in time saves nine* resides in input space one, which provides the framing structure for the blended space. The blended space also receives projections from input space two which embraces our knowledge of spreading not only flu, but also many other diseases. Vital relations of Analogy and Intentionality are exhibited in input space one and compressed in the blended space, since in both of them there is the intention to show that thoughtlessness may result in a huge problem which is rather difficult to deal with. Elements in the blend match their counterparts in input spaces. The blend is closely integrated and it can be manipulated as a single unit.

#### 4. Conclusion

The analysis conducted on our corpus has shown that constitutive and governing principles, together with the set of vital relations operate as constrains on idiom modifications. It has been shown that the principles and constrains to idiom modification designed within the Conceptual Integration theory apply well to accounting for instances of idiom modification. As far as constitutive principles are concerned, the analysis indicates that one or more canonical idiom forms serve as inputs or organizing frame(s). There are also one or more inputs that provide additional contextual or cultural domains of knowledge, which project selective salient elements into the organizing frame. Projected elements are combined and elaborated, and form a manageable blend with a new emergent meaning. Vital relations and governing principles represent the criteria of mobilizing different inputs into the network, because only those blends that successfully prompt for the entire network, as well as the things that can establish relevant web-links inner-space relations are acceptable. As far the vital relations are concerned, we can say that vital relations limit the number of open slots in the frame-providing idioms and also the extent to which these slots are open, because the open slots are those that allow the efficient compression of vital relations.

The blend must have relevance and must be well-integrated, i.e. manageable syntactically as a single unit. These two governing principles subsume the semantic, grammatical and lexical constraints and set limits to how far we should go in modifying an expression. It should not be modified beyond recognition as it would violate the relevance principle. Whatever new element is found in an idiom modification it has to be there for a reason (relevance), and the modification must be in line with the rules of grammar, i.e. syntax (a coherent unit). Grave violations of these principles may cause the failure of a blend—if an idiom is modified beyond recognition, violating the syntax and showing no evi-

dence of the reason for modification, it may be perceived as a mistake or not appreciated at all.

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the modified idioms are compressed versions of the canonical forms and new contexts. They are also well-integrated, manageable language units, which preserve and intensify vital relations. New elements appearing in modified idioms are relevant and as a result of all this modified idioms prompt for their own unpacking.

In conclusion, the analysis conducted shows that the Conceptual Integration Theory is equipped with mechanisms which can be used to analyze modified phraseological units in order to provide insights into mechanisms which regulate their creation and cognitive organization. The theory not only provides insight into the way we produce, but it may also give clues about the ways in which we process modified and blended figurative expressions. The Conceptual Integration Theory seems to provide us with the key for unlocking the internal cognitive choreography of idiom modifications presented in our case studies. However, certain questions raised in the paper must remain unanswered, i.e. whether clippings can be viewed as instances of blending or not.

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**TEORIJA KONCEPTUALNE INTEGRACIJE -  
KLJUČ ZA UNUTRAŠNJU KOGNITIVNU KOREOGRAFIJU  
MODIFICIRANIH IDIOMATSKIH IZRAZA**

U središtu je pozornosti ovog rada otkrivanje unutrašnje kognitivne koreografije modificiranih idiomatskih izraza. Smatra se da se modificirani idiomatski izrazi mogu objasniti teorijom konceptualne integracije čiji su tvorci Fauconnier i Turner. Principi optimalnosti i vitalni odnosi, ravnaju odnosima unutar integracijskih mreža. Glavni je cilj

ovog rada utvrditi u kojoj mjeri vitalni odnosi zajedno s principima optimalnosti mogu pojasniti mehanizme modifikacije idioma.

**Ključne riječi:** modifikacije idioma; teorija konceptualne integracije; principi optimalnosti; vitalni odnosi.