A Comparative Analysis of Urdu and Arabic Proverbs: Cognitive Blending in Translation and Cultural Disparities

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the translation of Urdu and Arabic proverbs into English, focusing on how Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT) can explain the cognitive and cultural shifts that occur during the translation process. Proverbs, as expressions of cultural wisdom, often carry deeply embedded moral lessons, social values, and emotional nuances that may be altered or lost in translation, particularly when moving between languages as distinct as Urdu and Arabic. By applying CBT, this research investigates how different mental spaces within the source languages blend to create meaning and how these blends are affected when translated into English. The study identifies significant cultural differences between Urdu and Arabic proverbs, emphasizing how these differences shape the cognitive blending process and, ultimately, the translation outcome. It also examines the challenges faced by translators in maintaining the integrity of the original cultural context while adapting proverbs for an English-speaking audience. The findings highlight the importance of understanding cultural and conceptual knowledge in the culture of source languages and the culture of the target languages through the translation of proverbs. This paper contributes to the field of translation studies by demonstrating the relevance of CBT in translating culturally rich expressions and offering insights into the cognitive processes at play during this challenging aspect of translation.

Keywords: Cognitive Blending Theory, translation studies, Urdu proverbs, Arabic proverbs, cultural differences, mental spaces, proverbs translation

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are short but important sayings that convey moral lessons, useful advice and cultural values. These old proverbs are usually used to preserve cultural identity and identity among the various communities. Since these proverbs vary in meaning from one language to another and include many different experiences of people in different cultures, they could be considered part of a collective perception of the world. (Madmarova et al., 2021). When one translates proverbs from one language to another, for example between Urdu and Arabic, then the deeper meanings and qualities of these proverbs could be lost or mixed up.

Urdu and Arabic are closely related literary traditions with many proverbs that have very deep moral and ethical lessons. In South Asia, proverbs are a very important part of cultural identity, reflecting centuries of tradition and values. Arabic proverbs are also deeply connected to the historical and philosophical basis

of the Arab world. Such proverbs are not only part of society in both cultures but also are considered part of daily life. They shape social relations and relationships to others and also make moral decisions.

Proverbs exist everywhere in the world, just like in various cultures, albeit with phrases and sayings peculiar to each culture. The issue of translation arises when trying to translate proverbs, as it goes well beyond words, encompasses an entire culture, its conceptual framework, and its emotional undertones, which are unique to the source language (Vishwakarma 2023). For one, Urdu is inherently more contextualized engaged than Arabic, and it owes that to the culture and cognitive architecture of the languages, which informs its understanding of proverbs.

We apply Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT), a cognitive linguistic theory that examines the role of distinct mental spaces in constructing meaning to blend different concepts. Using CBT helps interpret how proverbs blend cultural and conceptual meanings, leading to deeper wisdom (Nugraha, 2023). With this approach, we will analyse the input spaces and blends resulting from the translation of the Urdu proverbs into Arabic to ascertain what changes are made to the meaning in the translation into English.

Significance of the Study

This study offers about the understanding of the cognitive processes involved in the translation of proverbs (in two different languages and cultures), this paper contributes to an increasing body of work in translation studies and linguistic anthropology, as well as to the wider study of translators, linguists and cultural scholars who systematically try to maintain the integrity of highly culturally valuable expressions when transliterating. Finally, it sheds light on the role of proverbs as both linguistic and cultural bridges between languages and societies.

Research objectives

1. To analyse how the input spaces and cognitive blends in Urdu proverbs shape their meanings and affect their English translation.

2. To examine how the input spaces and cognitive blends in Arabic proverbs shape their meanings and impact their English translation.

3. To investigate the cultural and conceptual differences between Urdu and Arabic proverbs and their influence on their interpretation in English.

Research Questions

1. How do the input spaces and cognitive blends in Urdu proverbs shape their meaning and influence their English translation?

2. How do the input spaces and cognitive blends in Arabic proverbs shape their meaning and influence their English translation?

3. How do the cultural and conceptual differences between Urdu and Arabic proverbs influence their interpretation in English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the literature review is to investigate the application of Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT) in the translation of proverbs (primarily Urdu and Arabic proverbs). Proverbs have been perceived as culturally significant expressions reflecting the beliefs, values and traditions of a particular community. As the proverbs are translated into English, they undergo multiple forms of meaning as well as cultural

context. To be able to translate accurately, one needs to know how input spaces and blends work in both languages and also how cultural and conceptual differences exist between them.

Proverbs and Their Role in Culture

Proverbs are a common part of culture in Urdu and Arabic societies as it represents the values shared by people, social norms and collective wisdom. Proverbs in Urdu mostly represent values of family, community and morality**.** Proverbs as Cultural Geography Proverbs are short and widely accepted linguistic expressions that function as reservoirs of cultural wisdom, values, and beliefs (Siefring, 2004; Speake & Simpson, 2008). They represent cultural knowledge and reflect the experiences of a community (Andersson, 2013). There has been evidence of the prevalence of proverb analysis in many studies to reveal underlying cultural knowledge and the interplay between emotions and language. Zhao and Wu (2022) research on Chinese proverbs found evidence for the effect of proverbs on reflecting Mainland Chinese cultural norms regarding colour idioms; similarly, studies by (Giang, 2023; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987; Ying et al., 2017) shed light on the metaphorical associations of emotions that occur in proverbs. Kövecses (2022) documents the effectiveness of CSA, a system which centres around conceptual metaphor theory, in addressing how intricate conceptual frameworks, like emotions, are articulated within language. It focuses on how metaphorical expressions and the organising principles of the language they are expressed in are utilised (Gentner, 1983). The theory of conceptual metaphor was first constructed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who have been some of the major scholars studying language in emotional contexts. Metaphorical mappings that influence emotional expression and some underlying mental mechanisms for portraying emotions in language have been studied with the use of the CSA framework.

Challenges in Translating Proverbs

Proverbs are often considered naturally difficult to translate since they're culturally distinct expressions that are fairly well embedded in the cultural fabric of the original language. Studies have found that proverbs often incorporate cultural metaphors, symbolism, and contextual meanings that may not be directly equivalent in other languages (Baker, 2018). Classe (2000) suggests that differences between SL culture and TL culture may compromise translation since there are certain contextual aspects which have features related to the SL culture entirely and do not occur in TL culture (these include some unusual lifestyle or habit of special people that do not exist in the TL). According to Emery (1997), the problem that translators encounter when translating proverbs is their cultural boundness. They elaborate that the translator is a mediator between cultures and should translate the literal and figurative meaning of the proverbs as well as their communicative effect.

Ray (2008) agrees that, to start translation, he decodes the SL and encodes the TL. These things are created by linguistic and cultural factors that make the translation procedure difficult. Source: (Newmark,1988). Foreign cultural expressions can be ecological, material, and social. They also possess expressions belonging to social organisations, political, religious, artistic, gestures and habits. These cultural expressions might be found in proverbs, collocations, phrasal verbs, figures of speech and metaphors. Translating cultural texts is no simple task and translators need to keep track of the culture they translate from and the culture they translate to. Proverbs have cultural contents which cause problems to translators.

Cognitive Blending Theory in Translation Studies

The Kecskes (2015) study goes in-depth on how Cognitive Blending Theory explains the developments in thinking that occur with the translation of proverbs. The proverb's mental spaces are often tied to a certain deeply rooted culture, and the way these spaces blend can change when the proverb is translated to other languages and cultures. For instance, Urdu and Arabic contain sayings that, for varying cultural reasons

and conceptual frameworks, would not make sense when rendered into English. CBT aids towards understanding these developments of meaning, and with it, shifts of meaning throughout the translation process. As noted, cultural and conceptual gaps are critical in formulating proverbs and their corresponding translations. In Urdu, for instance, family cohesion and social harmony are advanced, which is relatable to proverbs. Strength and honour, on the other hand, are individualistic and much more common in Arabic proverbs. These cultural differences do impact the comprehension and translation of proverbs, for the translator attempting to render them into English faces the challenge of culture-bound notions that they do not possess (Nida, 2003).

The literature review illustrates how critical cognitive blending theory is for understanding the translation of Urdu and Arabic proverbs. It emphasises the aim of the study to investigate the role of mental spaces and blends in the meaning of the sayings and the cultural gaps and concepts in the languages relative to their understanding in English. Analysing such utterances from the perspective of CBT is beneficial for translators. This approach optimises their attempts to preserve the essence and meaning of intricate phrases within the text

METHODOLOGY

This study examines the process of translating English proverbs into Urdu and Arabic, recognising the cultural elements that may be lost in translation, by examining them in the light of the Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT). Here we briefly describe the method used for research design, data gathering and its analysis.

Research Design

This study is qualitative and cross-comparative, drawing primarily from CBT as the main lens of analysis. CBT, defined by Fauconnier and Turner (2002), illustrates how distinct spaces or 'cognitive spaces' merge to create new meaning. This approach is useful in arguing how the meaning associated with proverbs changes through translation and the contexts that impact their culture. In this regard, therefore, the research seeks to explain the cognitive processes involved in translating English proverbs into either Urdu or Arabic.

Data Collection

The data for this study were gathered for consideration of ten Urdu and ten Arabic proverbs; for relevance and cultural weight, each was selected. The chosen proverbs represent the systemic cultural socio-moral norms of morals, social cohesion, value of time, and value of effort towards which both Urdu and Arabic culture revolve. A variety of cultures of South Asia and the Middle East are presented in the chosen proverbs, which include family love, respect, and selflessness. For Arabic proverbs culturally important wisdom themes are added too as well as those related to perseverance, time management, and hard work. Each proverb is given an English version along with the translation, and the study will examine how accurately the intended meaning's cultural context is embedded in English translations of the proverbs.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

In the analysis of the selected proverbs, this study will employ Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT). The analysis comprises several basic stages addressing the cognitive and cultural aspects relating to the translation of proverbs. Identifying the Proverb's Mental Input Spaces: The preliminary step of any analysis consists of identifying the domain, or spaces, that is the concept system underlying a proverb. Input spaces can be components such as "time", "effort", "nature", "people", etc.

Exploring the Blends: During the second phase of analysis we should study how the mental concepts from different domains combine to produce new meanings that we call blends. Two mental spaces

develop new merged meaning when their elements unite cognitively to function as an integrated whole. The evaluation will be carried out on both original proverbs and their English counterparts to observe modifications within conceptual blends across the translation process.

Cultural Context: The analysis requires evaluation of the cultural framework where the proverbs find their original placement. According to CBT, while linguistic rules affect cognitive blends, their actual structure emerges from personal as well as communal cultural experiences (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). This research will examine how cultural differences between Urdu and Arabic language groups affect the interpretation, along with the translation procedure of proverbs.

Comparison of Translations: The research analyses original proverbs and verifies the accuracy of English translations in maintaining proper cognitive blend compositions and cultural nuances in their interpretation. This evaluation detects any transformations which emerge in meaning or emotional expressions, or cultural settings while performing the translation process.

Assessing the Effect of Cognitive Blending: Lastly, the study will merge tested outcomes to evaluate how cognitive blending shapes the entire meaning in proverbs. Scientists aim to determine whether cultural meaning, along with cognitive composition remains intact during translation or gets altered due to language and cultural differences.

Tools and Techniques

The proverbs will be coded qualitatively, where each proverb is coded according to its input spaces and the cognitive blends. This coding scheme enables a systematic examination of how the mental spaces are combined and how the blends are influenced by translation. Secondary sources of Cognitive Blending Theory and cultural linguistics will also be used to back up the analysis and add further context to the understanding of the interplay between language, cognition, and culture.

Limitations

Limitation of this study is that, translation is subjective. One can interpret the proverbs differently from them, depending on the linguistic and cultural context in which the translators are and this could impact on how the meaning is preserved. Further, the proverbs under investigation for this research paper represent the cultures, where they are common, but there might be some differences of meanings in the different regions of the Urdu and Arabic speaking worlds.

Ethical considerations

The study adopts ethical procedures since it has ensured that the original sources of proverbs are correctly cited without disregarding their cultural values. The translators pay special attention to the keeping of the actual meaning of proverbs in translating them although they do respect their cultural origin. The research will project the true meaning of proverbs in combination with respect to their original as well as translated versions.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, we focus on the analysis of Urdu and Arabic proverbs using Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT) to explore blends and mental spaces. Cognitive Blending, as a theoretical framework, is instrumental in unpacking the complex mental spaces embedded in these proverbs, as it aids in creating meaning through the integration of multiple cognitive domains. Each proverb in the study carries a rich cultural context, shaped by societal norms, values, and emotional nuances that reflect the collective consciousness of the source culture. The analysis uses CBT to explore the mental spaces at play in the original proverbs and how these spaces blend to form meanings that are later expressed in English. For instance, proverbs that highlight concepts like time, effort, or morality are examined for their linguistic structure, cultural significance, and the cognitive mechanisms underpinning their creation.

Table 4.1

Urdu Proverbs and Their English Translation.

Urdu Proverb	English Translation
نیک کام کرنے سے کبھی پچھتایا نہیں جاتا	A good deed is never regretted.
اونٹ کے منہ میں زیرا	Like a mustard seed in a camel's mouth.
دودھ کا دودھ، پانی کا پانی	Milk for milk, water for water.
جو بونے وہی کاٹیں گے	You will reap what you sow.
آسمان کا چھوٹا ستارہ زمین پر بڑا نظر آتا ہے	A small star in the sky looks big on earth.
ہاتھ کنگن کو آرسی کیا	What is the use of proving the obvious?
وقت کا پکا ہمیشہ پچھتاتا ہے	The person who is always punctual will regret in the end.
نیکی کر دریا میں ڈال	Do good and throw it in the river.
گزرنے والا وقت واپس نہیں آتا	Time that passes will never return.
ایک تیر سے دو شکار	Kill two birds with one stone.

To begin the analysis, each proverb will be examined using **Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT)**, exploring the mental spaces involved and how their blend influences the meaning and interpretation of the proverbs in both Urdu and English.

Proverb: "نیک کام کرنے سے کبھی پچھتایا نہیں جاتا"

Translation: "A good deed is never regretted."

Input Space 1: Good Deed.

Represents actions of helping others, showing kindness, and acting ethically, linked to selflessness and moral correctness.

Input Space 2: Regret

Represents the emotional response of dissatisfaction or remorse, typically after an undesirable action.

The Blend:

The blend suggests that performing a good deed results in no regret because these actions lead to personal fulfilment, peace, and satisfaction. The proverb reinforces that moral actions bring about positive emotional outcomes, which is culturally significant in Pakistani society, where selflessness and generosity are highly valued.

Proverb: "اونٹ کے منہ میں زیرا"

Translation: "Like a mustard seed in a camel's mouth."

Input Space 1: Mustard Seed.

Represents something tiny, insignificant, or out of place compared to its surroundings.

Input Space 2: Camel's Mouth.

Represents something large, powerful, and capable of holding large objects.

The Blend:

The blend emphasizes disproportion and misfit, highlighting how something small (like a mustard seed) is out of place in a large context (like a camel's mouth). It suggests that small actions or insignificant things are not suitable for contexts requiring greater scale or influence. The proverb speaks to inappropriateness or the inability of small things to influence larger systems, with deeper cultural ties to agrarian societies where size and scale matter.

Proverb: "دودھ کا دودھ، پانی کا پانی"

Translation: "Milk for milk, water for water."

Input Space 1: Milk.

Represents purity, value, and richness—something valuable and essential.

Input Space 2: Water.

Represents neutrality, basicness, and commonness—something that is widely available but not as valuable as milk.

The Blend:

The blend creates the idea of distinguishing between things based on their true nature. The proverb teaches that things should be judged and treated according to their inherent value: valuable things (like milk) should be treated as such, while neutral things (like water) should be dealt with accordingly. The proverb is deeply tied to moral clarity and social norms in Pakistani culture, where things (and people) are often evaluated based on their true essence.

Proverb: "جو بوئے وہی کاٹیں گے"

Translation: "You will reap what you sow."

Input Space 1: Sowing Seeds.

Represents effort, intentionality, and action toward a goal, where the action is the beginning of the process.

Input Space 2: Reaping Harvest.

Represents the outcome or consequences of actions, whether good or bad, the results of one's effort.

The Blend:

The blend emphasizes the cause-and-effect relationship: your actions (sowing) directly determine the consequences (reaping). This proverb teaches that good actions lead to positive outcomes, while bad actions result in negative consequences. The cultural emphasis on personal responsibility and accountability in Pakistani society strengthens the message that effort and actions have direct results.

Proverb: "آسمان کا چھوٹا ستارہ زمین پر بڑا نظر آتا ہے"

Translation: "A small star in the sky looks big on earth."

Input Space 1: Small Star

Represents something distant, insignificant, and far away, making it seem larger than it really is.

Input Space 2: Earth's Perspective

Represents human perception, where things appear larger due to distance or lack of context.

The Blend:

The blend speaks to perception: things that are distant or unreachable often appear more important or greater than they are. The proverb teaches that people often idealize or exaggerate things they don't fully understand or have access to. This is particularly significant in Pakistani culture, where distant figures (celebrities, leaders) are often idealized and their influence exaggerated.

Proverb: "ہاتھ کنگن کو آرسی کیا"

Translation: "What is the use of proving the obvious?"

Input Space 1: Hand

Represents something close, immediate, and self-evident, suggesting obviousness.

Input Space 2: Bracelet (Kangan)

Represents something that is already visible, worn, and known, indicating that no proof is needed.

The Blend:

The blend emphasizes the futility of proving what is already known or obvious. If something is clear, like a bracelet on the hand, there's no need to demonstrate it. This proverb highlights common sense and rationality, which are culturally important values in Pakistani society. It suggests that explanations or justifications are unnecessary when the truth is already apparent.

Proverb: "وقت کا پکا ہمیشہ پچھتاتا ہے"

Translation: "The person who is always punctual will regret it in the end."

Input Space 1: Punctuality

Represents discipline, order, and rigidity in time management, often associated with responsibility.

Input Space 2: Regret

Represents feelings of disappointment or negative outcomes, typically emerging from over-commitment or too much focus on control.

The Blend:

The blend combines rigidity with regret, suggesting that overemphasis on punctuality or time management may lead to regret later. The proverb warns that too much control or obsession with schedules can result in missed opportunities or frustration. In Pakistani culture, where time is highly

valued, this proverb stresses the need for balance between being punctual and allowing room for flexibility.

Proverb: "نیکی کر دریا میں ڈال"

Translation: "Do good and throw it in the river."

Input Space 1: Doing Good.

Represents virtuous actions like helping others or acting morally, done without the expectation of reward.

Input Space 2: Throwing in the River.

Represents selflessness and the disposability of good deeds, where actions are done without seeking recognition.

The Blend:

The blend suggests that good deeds should be done for their own sake, with no expectation of acknowledgement or reward. The river symbolises selflessness, where acts of kindness are given freely, with no desire for return. This reflects Pakistani cultural values of anonymous charity and selfless giving, where helping others is a moral duty.

Proverb: "گزرنے والا وقت واپس نہیں آتا"

Translation: "Time that passes will never return."

Input Space 1: Passing Time.

Represents time moving forward, always irreversible, and something that cannot be controlled or reversed.

Input Space 2: Returning Time.

Represents the ideal of reversing time, or going back to relive moments or opportunities that were missed.

The Blend:

The blend emphasises the irreversibility of time and the importance of acting in the present. Once time passes, it's lost forever, and this reminds people to use their time wisely. In Pakistani culture, where time is often linked to family obligations and personal success, this proverb reinforces the idea that every moment is valuable and should not be wasted.

Proverb: "ایک تیر سے دو شکار"

Translation: "Kill two birds with one stone."

Input Space 1: Arrow.

Represents action or effort, a purposeful act that aims to achieve a goal with precision.

Input Space 2: Two Birds.

Represents multiple goals or objectives that are targeted and achieved with a single effort.

The Blend:

The blend suggests that a single action or effort can lead to multiple outcomes or results, making it a metaphor for efficiency and resourcefulness. It highlights the value of clever problem-solving, where one can achieve more with less effort. In Pakistani culture, this proverb speaks to the cultural emphasis on multitasking, efficiency, and time management, where resourcefulness is highly valued.

Table 4.2

Input spaces and blend in Urdu proverbs

Proverb	Input Space 1	Input Space 2	Blend
نیک کام کرنے سے کبھی پچھتایا نہیں جاتا	Good deed (helping others, kindness)	Regret (remorse or sorrow)	Performing a good deed leads to no remorse or regret.
اونٹ کے منہ میں زیرا	Mustard seed (small, insignificant)	Camel's mouth (large, powerful)	A small, insignificant item compared to something much larger.
دودھ کا دودھ، پانی کا پانی	Milk (pure, valuable)	Water (neutral, basic)	A distinction between purity and truth (milk) versus neutrality (water).
جو بونے وہی کاٹیں گے	Sowing seeds (effort and intention)	Reaping harvest (result or outcome)	Your actions will determine your future outcomes.
آسمان کا چھوٹا ستارہ زمین پر بڑا نظر آتا ہے	Small star (something distant, small)	Earth (perspective of a larger entity)	Things may appear larger when viewed from a distant or unfamiliar perspective.
ہاتھ کنگن کو آرسی کیا	Hand (person or situation)	Bracelet (evidence, already known)	Something self-evident does not need further proof or demonstration.
وقت کا پکا ہمیشہ پچھتاتا ہے	Punctuality (always on time)	Regret (feeling of dissatisfaction)	Being too rigid with time can lead to regret or missed opportunities.
نیکی کر دریا میں ڈال	Doing good (virtuous act)	Throwing in the river (acting selflessly)	Good deeds should be done without expecting any reward or return.
گزرنے والا وقت واپس نہیں آتا	Passing time (time moving forward)	Returning time (possibility of reversal)	Time is irretrievable once it's passed.
ایک تیر سے دو شکار	Arrow (effort or action)	Two birds (two goals or results)	Achieving multiple goals with a single action or effort.

Table 4.3

Arabic proverbs and their English translation

Arabic Proverb	English Translation
العقل زینة	"The mind is an ornament."
من جدّ وجد	"Whoever strives, finds."
الطيور على أشكالها تقع	"Birds of a feather flock together."
درهم وقاية خير من قنطار علاج	"An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."
إلى ما يعرف الصقر يشويه	"He who doesn't know the falcon will roast it."
على قدر أهل العزم تأتي العزائم	"According to the strength of the people, come the ambitions."

من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله	"He who does not thank people, does not thank God."
رب ضارة نافعة	"Every cloud has a silver lining."
الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك	"Time is like a sword; if you don't cut it, it will cut you."
العقل أفضل من المال	"The mind is better than wealth."

Proverb: "العقل زينة"

Translation: "The mind is an ornament."

This proverb metaphorically compare the mind with an ornament, employing the notion of an ornament to bring attention to the worth and significance of wisdom and intelligence. Employing Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT), we can deconstruct the mental spaces involved and the blend it creates to see its meaning in depth.

Input Space 1: Mind symbolizes intellect, wisdom, and mental capacity. It is linked with reason, understanding, and the power to think critically and logically. The mind here represents the central part of a person's intellectual powers.

Input Space 2: An ornament is something that adorns or beautifies. It's something that is put into make a person or an object beautiful or valuable. An ornament is usually regarded as a sign of prestige, decoration, and refinement, which makes the appearance or status of the person or object being adorned better.

The combination that arises from these two places is the notion that the mind, like an ornament, brings value to one's existence. The mind is not only useful but also used to beautify and add distinction to one's character, personality, and social class, as an ornament would to a thing. This metaphor implies that wisdom and intelligence are not only necessary for functional reasons but also enhance an individual's worth and beauty in a social or cultural sense. The proverb underscores the idea that a well-developed mind is a precious asset, just like an ornament is valuable in making something stand out.

Proverb: "من جدَّ وجد"

Translation: "Whoever strives, finds."

Input Space 1: Striving (effort, hard work, determination).

This represents the action of putting in effort, working toward a goal, or being persistent in one's endeavors.

Input Space 2: Finding (success, achievement).

This represents the outcome of efforts—reaching a desired goal or attaining what was sought.

The Blend:

The blend combines the effort of striving with the result of finding something. It conveys that hard work leads to success, and without putting in the necessary effort, one cannot expect to find or achieve their goals. The proverb encourages persistence and dedication, emphasizing that results come to those who persevere.

Proverb: "الطيور على أشكالها تقع"

Translation: "Birds of a feather flock together."

Input Space 1: Birds of the same species (similar entities).

Represents people or things that share common characteristics, values, or goals.

Input Space 2: Flocking together (coming together, association).

Represents the natural tendency of like-minded or similar things to gather or unite with each other.

The Blend:

The blend creates the concept that similar individuals or groups naturally gather together, based on commonalities such as interest, background, or values. The proverb suggests that people tend to surround themselves with those who are similar to them, reinforcing the idea of like attracting like. It reflects how social dynamics often lead to homogeneity within groups.

Proverb: "درهم وقاية خير من قنطار علاج"

Translation: "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."

Input Space 1: Prevention (taking action before something happens).

Represents the precautionary measures or actions taken to avoid problems or complications.

Input Space 2: Cure (solving a problem after it has occurred).

Represents the remedy or solution applied after a problem arises, often requiring significant effort or resources.

The Blend:

This proverb blends the idea of preventing problems before they occur with the costly effort of fixing problems after they've happened. It conveys that it's more efficient and beneficial to take preventative measures than to deal with the consequences later. The proverb advocates for proactive behaviour, where a small effort in prevention can save a lot of effort and resources in fixing issues later.

Proverb: "إللي ما يعرف الصقر يشويه"

Translation: "He who doesn't know the falcon will roast it."

Input Space 1: Falcon (a majestic, valuable bird).

Represents something that requires knowledge, skill, and understanding to handle properly.

Input Space 2: Roasting (the act of cooking or mishandling).

Represents the lack of knowledge or misjudgment that leads to improper treatment or action.

The Blend:

The proverb blends the idea that lack of knowledge can lead to mistakes or misunderstandings. Specifically, someone unfamiliar with the falcon (or any complex or valuable thing) will mishandle it,

leading to its misuse or damage. The proverb speaks to the importance of expertise and understanding before attempting to deal with something or someone valuable. It warns against the dangers of ignorance.

Proverb: "على قدر أهل العزم تأتي العزائم"

Translation: "According to the strength of the people, come the ambitions."

Input Space 1: Strength of the people (determination, perseverance).

Represents the individual or collective ability to overcome challenges or work toward a goal.

Input Space 2: Ambitions (goals, desires).

Represents the aspirations or goals people set, often based on their personal or collective capacity to achieve them.

The Blend:

The blend creates the understanding that the greater the strength or determination of an individual or group, the larger and more ambitious their goals and actions will be. The proverb conveys that ambition is closely tied to one's ability or willingness to work hard, persevere, and overcome obstacles. It encourages people to strengthen their resolve to achieve greater success.

Proverb: "من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله"

Translation: "He who does not thank people, does not thank God."

Input Space 1: Thanking people (expressing gratitude toward others).

Represents the act of showing appreciation or acknowledging others for their kindness, help, or actions.

Input Space 2: Thanking God (expressing gratitude toward a higher power).

Represents the act of showing spiritual gratitude or acknowledging divine blessings.

The Blend:

The blend highlights that gratitude toward people and gratitude toward God are deeply connected. If one cannot show appreciation for human kindness, it may be impossible to show true gratitude for divine blessings. The proverb suggests that gratitude is a fundamental virtue, and it encourages people to acknowledge the good in both the divine and human realms.

Proverb: "ربَّ ضارةٍ نافعة"

Translation: "Every cloud has a silver lining."

Input Space 1: Harm or adversity (difficult situations, problems, or challenges).

Represents the negative or unpleasant events that one may encounter.

Input Space 2: Benefit or opportunity (positive outcomes, hidden benefits).

Represents the potential for growth, learning, or hidden advantages that emerge from challenging situations.

The Blend:

The blend combines the negative and positive aspects of life, suggesting that even in difficult times, there is always something good to be gained or learned. The proverb teaches that adversity often leads to growth, strength, or opportunities that might not have been visible initially. It emphasises the silver lining in every difficult situation.

Proverb: "الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك"

Translation: "Time is like a sword; if you don't cut it, it will cut you."

Input Space 1: Time (the continuous passage of moments, limited and precious).

Represents the passing nature of time, something that cannot be stopped or controlled.

Input Space 2: Sword (a tool for action, power, and impact).

Represents a sharp instrument that can be used to cut or harm, symbolizing how time can be both beneficial if used wisely or destructive if wasted.

The Blend:

The blend combines the idea that time is a valuable resource, and if not used wisely (like a sword that's wielded carefully), it will have negative consequences. The proverb warns that failing to manage time effectively can lead to regret, lost opportunities, or damage in one's life. It emphasizes time management and self-discipline.

Proverb: "العقل أفضل من المال"

Translation: "The mind is better than wealth."

Input Space 1: The mind (intellect, wisdom, knowledge).

Represents mental capabilities and intellectual resources that are essential for decision-making, problem-solving, and achieving success.

Input Space 2: Wealth (material riches, money).

Represents financial resources, material success, or economic status.

The Blend:

The blend combines mental abilities with material wealth, conveying that while wealth can provide temporary security and comfort, wisdom and intelligence are far more valuable because they last longer, lead to better decisions, and cannot be taken away. The proverb suggests that knowledge and wisdom have a more lasting and meaningful impact than the fleeting nature of money.

Table 4.4

Input spaces and blend in Arabic proverbs

Arabic Proverb	Input Space 1	Input Space 2	Blend
العقل زينة	The mind (intellect, wisdom, knowledge)	Ornament (something that	The mind, like an ornament, **enhances** a person's worth and value, both socially and

		adds value)	intellectually.
مَن جَدَّ وَجَد	Striving (effort, hard work, determination)	Finding (success, achievement)	**Hard work** leads to **success**, highlighting the direct relationship between effort and reward.
الطيور على أشكالها تقع	Birds of the same species (similar people)	Flocking together (association, unity)	People with **similar values** or traits tend to **gather together**, forming close-knit groups based on commonalities.
درهم وقاية خير من قنطار علاج	Prevention (taking precautionary measures)	Cure (remedy or solution)	**Prevention** is **more efficient** than **cure**, emphasizing that **avoiding problems** is more beneficial than solving them later.
إلى ما يعرف الصقر يشويه	Falcon (something requiring expertise)	Roasting (misjudging, mishandling)	**Lack of knowledge** leads to **mistakes**, particularly when handling something valuable or requiring expertise.
على قدر أهل العزم تأتي العزائم	Strength of the people (determination, perseverance)	Ambitions (goals, desires)	The **stronger** the determination, the **greater** the ambitions or goals that can be achieved.
من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله	Thanking people (expressing gratitude)	Thanking God (expressing spiritual gratitude)	**Gratitude** toward **people** is linked to **gratitude toward God**, emphasizing that one cannot be truly thankful to God without appreciating others.
رُبَّ ضارةٍ نافعة	Harm (adversity, difficulty)	Benefit (hidden opportunity)	**Adversity** can often lead to **unexpected benefits**, suggesting that difficult situations may hide opportunities for growth.
الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك	Time (passing, limited resource)	Sword (powerful, sharp tool)	**Time** is like a **sword**—if not properly managed, it will negatively affect you, highlighting the importance of time management.
العقل أفضل من المال	The mind (wisdom, intelligence)	Wealth (money, material possessions)	**Wisdom** and **intellect** are more valuable than **material wealth**, as they have a lasting impact on a person's life.

Cultural and Conceptual Considerations for Urdu and Arabic Proverbs

Similarities

Emphasis on Moral Values: Both Urdu and Arabic proverbs place strong emphasis on moral actions, such as doing good and personal responsibility. Proverbs like "نیک کام کرنے سے کبھی پچھتایا نہیں جاتا" (A good deed is never regretted) in Urdu and "مَن جَدَّ وَجَد" (Whoever strives, finds) in Arabic reflect a shared cultural value that good deeds and efforts lead to positive outcomes, often connected to a sense of self-fulfilment and peace.

Cause and Effect: Both sets of proverbs emphasise the cause-and-effect relationship. For example, "جو بوئے گے وہی کاٹیں گے" (You will reap what you sow) in Urdu and "من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله" (He who does not thank people, does not thank God) in Arabic convey the idea that one's actions have direct consequences, and personal responsibility plays a central role in shaping future outcomes.

Use of Nature Metaphors: Both languages use metaphors derived from nature and the environment. For example, "دودھ کا دودھ، پانی کا پانی" (Milk for milk, water for water) in Urdu and "الطيور على أشكالها تقع" (Birds of a feather flock together) in Arabic use elements from nature (milk, water, birds) to convey moral or social messages. These metaphors are simple to comprehend since they are based on common experiences and the natural world.

Focus on Time and Hard Work: Both sets of proverbs emphasise the need for time management and hard work. "بچھتا تا ہے وقت کا پابند ہمیشہ" (The one who is always on time will regret later) in Urdu and "الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك" (Time is like a sword; if you don't cut it, it will cut you) in Arabic emphasise the connection between time and consequences, threatening that neglecting time can cause adverse consequences.

DIFFERENCES

Cultural Significance of Actions and Consequences:

Urdu Proverbs: Most Urdu proverbs have a pronounced social and familial context, particularly in terms of ideas such as respect and unselfishness. Proverbs such as "ڈال میں کر دریا نیکی" (Do good and throw it in the river) stress humility as a concept under which good needs to be carried out selflessly, without acknowledgement. Family links, communal services, and confidentiality in good work are appreciated from a cultural perspective.

Arabic Proverbs: In Arabic proverbs, perseverance and personal will are dominant themes, as illustrated by "من جدَّ وجد" (Whoever strives, finds). This is because in Arabic culture, great importance is given to personal strength, tenacity, and independence. Inner strength and the value of knowledge and wisdom are also emphasized in Arabic proverbs, as in the proverb "العقل زينة" (The mind is an ornament).

RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL CONTEXT

Urdu Proverbs:

The Urdu proverb "ڈال میں کر دریا نیکی" translates to "Do good and throw it in the river." This proverb carries a deep spiritual and religious message, reflecting the Islamic values of selflessness and humility. It emphasizes that acts of kindness should be performed without the expectation of recognition or reward. The metaphor of throwing the good deed in the river symbolizes the idea of doing good quietly, without seeking acknowledgement from others. The ultimate reward for such selfless acts is believed to come from God, reinforcing the concept of sincerity and purity of intention in Islam. This proverb highlights the importance of humility and the belief that God sees and rewards every act of goodness, even when it goes unnoticed by others.

Arabic Proverbs: Several Arabic proverbs draw upon Islamic teaching and practice, emphasizing responsibility towards family and society. For example, "من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله" (He who does not thank people, does not thank God) highlights the Islamic ethic of gratitude towards people and God. Although Arabic proverbs also reflect religious meaning, particularly Islamic morality, they have a greater tendency to emphasize effort and self-reliance by the individual. Proverbs such as "إلي ما يعرف الصقر يشويه" (He who doesn't know the falcon will roast it) highlight knowledge and skill as essential, and these can be linked to competence and personal improvement.

TIME AND ITS IMPACT

Urdu Proverbs: Time is often discussed in Urdu proverbs as a resource to be valued, but there is also a focus on balance. For instance, "وقت کا پابند ہمیشہ پچھتاتا ہے" (The person who is always punctual will regret in the end) suggests that being too rigid with time can result in missed opportunities or regret, encouraging a more flexible approach.

Arabic Proverbs: In Arabic, time is treated more like a resource to be mastered. Proverbs like "الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك" (Time is like a sword; if you don't cut it, it will cut you) warn of the consequences of wasted time, suggesting that time should be actively managed and controlled to avoid negative outcomes.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the Urdu and Arabic proverbs revealed certain significant observations on the way Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT) supports the process of generating meaning in proverbs when they are translated to English. First of all, the research showed that while both Urdu and Arabic proverbs are based on similar cultural themes, such as those of the values, accountability and the value of time, how the concepts are blended in the respective languages is different. In Urdu, the proverbs are more centred around social and family responsibility and are inclined to adopt the collective virtues like true sacrifices and due respect. For example, the proverb "نیکی کر دریا میں ڈال" (Do good and throw it in the river) encourages selfless behaviors highlighting the cultural value of humility and anonymous charity. On the other hand, Arabic sayings such as, "من جدّ وجد" (Whoever strives, finds), emphasizes personal effort and individual persistence which emphasizes more on self-reliance and individual success.

Second, the cognitive blends that came out of input spaces combination varied hugely for Urdu and Arabic proverbs, reflecting their cultural backgrounds. In Urdu, the simple plain metaphors used in proverbs like "دودھ کا دودھ، پانی کا پانی" (Milk for milk, water for water) draw moral simplicity and social fairness from actual life exemplars such as milk and water. Simple and pure is a cultural meaning that the mixture here borrows. On the contrary, Arabic proverbs are more likely to contain abstract ideas – such proverbs as "الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك" (time is like a sword, if you do not use it, it will use you. if you don't cut it, it will cut you, combining the idea of time with sharpness and strength of a sword and urging people to do the same with time (if you don't cut it, it will cut you) combing the idea of time with the sharpness and strength of a sword, asking people to treat time as a sharp sword. That is the Arab cultural value for discipline, control and the consequences of neglecting time. Finally, the activities of interpreting demonstrated the challenges of preserving the cognitive and cultural sense of these proverbs in English. In cases such as in: "جو بوئے وہی کاٹیں گے" (You reap what you sow) the additional English translation had managed to preserve both the cognitive blend and cultural message. But such culture specific proverbs like "اونٹ کے منہ میں زیرا" (Like a mustard seed in a camel's mouth) the English translation failed to convey the cultural message. This is a proverb which uses the allegory of a camel and an extremely rooted image of South Asian as well as Middle Eastern cultures and to capture the full strength of this proverb without distorting the strength of its cultural symbolism is very difficult to do in an English translation. Overall, though frequently the versions were quite literal, they sometimes failed to capture the deeper cultural and mental meanings of the original proverbs.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that through the analysis of the Arabic and Urdu proverbs, the key role played by the Cognitive Blending Theory (CBT) in its explanation of how Arabic and Urdu proverbs use blends and input spaces. From the analysis, it was revealed that although both Urdu and Arabic proverbs have similar thematic areas of morality, rule of time, and personal accountability, their cognitive blends differ due to the kind of cognitive and cultural background that is implicit in each language. Urdu proverbs are more group-oriented – family, sacrifice, and respect, while Arabic proverbs are more individual – effort, tenacity, and personal achievement. The dramatic difference between these cultural emphases has an enormous bearing on how these proverbs are cognitively blended and how differently they are translated in the English language. A major finding of this research is that Cognitive Blending Theory demonstrates that cross-mapping from mental spaces is not enough to produce a good translation process. Even the input spaces themselves are context-shaped, and the combining process involves the incorporation of these cultural inputs to sustain the meaning and intent of the original proverb. The role of cultural sensitivity in translation is emphasized, and it is illustrated that not only the cognitive components of proverbs but also the cultural dimension are essential for arriving at the intended message.

The significance of this research is in its contribution to cognitive linguistics and translation studies because, through looking into proverbs as culturally stored utterances, the vivid effects of mental space blending on translation are revealed. This study furthers the exploration of how meaning is constructed in language and how different meanings emerge by crossing cultural borders, using Cognitive Blending Theory. The research also highlights the importance of cultural consciousness in translation, and it proves that the cognitive and cultural strata of proverbs are vital to the desired message of proverbs. However, the limitation of the study is that proverb translation is subjective in the sense that each translator may translate proverbs differently, considering their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The study also examined a few proverbs from Urdu and Arabic, and future research may use their work on a larger number of proverbs or extend their analysis to other languages and cultures. Despite these limitations, the research is most helpful in probing the complex work of proverb translation and how cognitive blending helps to preserve cultural import.

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