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A Cognitive Study of Prototypes in the American Family Feud And Iraqi 'A'ilati Turbah TV Shows

A B S T R A C T

This study deals with the prototype theory of categorization from a cognitive perspective by applying it to the famous American "Family Feud " and Iraqi " 'A'ialti Turbah" TV shows. It examines cognitive Linguistics and its main principles. The cognitive process of categorization enables people to classify events , information , and objects that they meet in their region . It is worth mentioning that the current study is a new trend in analyzing the questions of the two shows by pointing the prototype and the factors or reasons that form the prototype. Hence , it aims at finding out the reasons or criteria that form the typical category member in different areas or countries. This study hypothesizes that prototypes formation process is influenced by the social contexts where prototypes are used . Prototypes are not one hundred percent agreed upon in a society. Each culture has its own prototype(the most representative member of a category) depending on different factors.

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دراسة ادراكية للنموذج البدئي في البرامج التلفزيونية سباق العائلة الامريكي وعائلي تريح العراقي

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الخلاصة:

تتناول هذه الدراسة نظرية النموذج البدئي للتصنيف من الناحية الادراكية و ذلك بتطبيقها على البرنامج الامريكي سباق العائلة و البرنامج عائلي تريح العراقي . تتناول هذه الدراسة علم اللغة الادراكي و اهم مبادئها . تساعد عملية التصنيف الناس بتصنيف الاحداث , المعلومات , والاجسام التي تحيط بهم . من الجدير بالذكر أن هذه الدراسة ذات طابع جديد في تحليل اسئلة البرنامجين من خلال الاشارة للنموذج البدئي والعوامل او الاسباب التي تشكله . هدف الدراسة اكتشاف المعايير التي تشكل النموذج البدئي بمناطق و بلدان مختلفة. تفترض هذه الدراسة ان عملية تشكيل النموذج البدئي تتأثر بالسياقات الاجتماعية

. النماذج البدائية ليس متفق عليها ١٠٠ % داخل المجتمع الواحد. كل ثقافة لديها نموذج بدئي خاص بها
اعتمادا على عدة عوامل مختلفة

1.Introduction

In every day discourse, people attempt to categorize everything (objects, concepts , events and information etc) that they encounter in their environment. Categorization is a significant cognitive process for its role in helping people to organize or classify and select events or information. Looking back at the history of the categorization process, one can notice and find that there are three theories of categorization which are the classical (Aristotelian) theory , prototype theory , and exemplar theory .The current work deals with the prototype model. Different scholars define the concept of ' prototype ' in different ways. In the researcher's view , it is the instance that shows the essential features of a concept or category . It is the ideal or central member of a category under which the other members are grouped .

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In this writing , the American Family Feud and Iraqi A' ilati Turbah TV shows are studied and their questions are classified into American and Iraqi ones in an equal way . Simply , the Feud or family Feud is an American TV game show that was created by Mark Goodson on July 12 , 1976, on ABC and on CBS. In the named show , there should be two families competing or challenging to name the common ideal responses to win a prize or cash. The same is followed by the Iraqi show which was aired by the artist Jawad AL – Shakarchi . In these shows easy questions are raised which are related to daily life . The presenters , in both shows, ask the questions and a number of top responses appear on the board and each response scores points which are different from the points of the other responses. These responses are gathered from random people in a time prior to the time of airing the shows. Usually , more than 100 responses are collected and the grades depend on the number of the responses collected. This argues to question about the reasons behind having different central answers although the questions ask about the same thing. The questions of the current work are (1) Is the prototype agreed upon in a society , i.e shall we get the same answer by the same society if the question about an ideal thing? (2) How and why the prototypical category member is influenced by culture?. (3) Is there a relation between a prototype and its social context? If yes, what is it? . In addition , to the questions , the work aims at clarifying what prototype is , finding out how can prototype

be dissimilar between societies . In this writing , it is hoped that this work is useful and beneficial for students , researchers of linguistics , and for those who are interested in understanding the concept of 'prototype' deeply.

1.1 The Nature of Cognitive Linguistics and its Principles

In the early 1970s , Cognitive Linguistics comes into appearance . It is a linguistic movement which studies language and mind rather than other studies. It gives more importance to the conceptual processes, the role of meaning , and embodied experience in the study of language and the mind . George Lakoff, Charels Fillmore , Gilles Faconnier , Leonard Talmy , and Ronald Lagacker (Evans et al , 2007: 22).

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Cognitive Linguistics is described as an enterprise , because it makes use of a group of assumptions , guiding principles , and perspectives which guide to complementary and confusing theories (Evans and Green , 2006: 3) . There are three simple hypotheses that Cognitive Linguistics highlights , as follows:

1. Language is controlled by using it frequently. Language users' knowledge is increased by using that language more and more.
2. Language and cognition have a great relation , they serve and complete each other. They cannot be separated .
3. Grammatical rules interweave and interact with conceptualization and knowledge . They are not arbitrary (Luodonpaa et al , 2017 : 2-3).

When investigating Cognitive Linguistics , one should write or talk about its assumptions. There are three essential assumptions that Cognitive Linguistics focuses on , they are listed below:

1. Language shoots all its structures to convey meaning .
2. Meaning is conceptual and can impose form on conceptual and perceptual raw material.
3. Linguistic abilities are linked to general abilities (Cruse , 2006: 26) .

1.2 Prototype Theory

Prototype theory is a human categorization model that people use to classify what they see , face , or have into categories . So, it becomes easy for them to recall a category or concept. This theory is introduced by Eleanor Rosch and her co- workers within a research about the categories internal structure in the mid 1970s. It takes two directions since its

emergence . The first direction is ' psycholexicology' which creates models to explain human conceptual memory and how it works. In the early 1980s, the second direction has a great success in linguistics (Geeraerts, 2006: 142).

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In the prototype theory , word meanings are understood by referring to atypical example. For example, people answer the question ' what a bird is ' by referring to a robin rather than referring to other bird(s) , this is because robin is the best instance that represents the bird category. People use the central (prototype) instance to include other instances to the category . There are two types of features which are essential to be stated. They are known as ' Defining features' and 'Characteristic features' . The first are the features that a category member shows . Regarding ' birds' they should have two wings , two legs , and feathers . The second features are optional properties that a category member may show . Once again 'birds' usually have the ability to fly , short and small legs. There are two main principles which help in the formation of a category . The first principle is ' the principle of cognitive economy' and the second one is ' the principle of perceived word structure ' . In terms of the former , humans minimize their cognitive efforts while they obtain information about their environment where they have contacts with various things or people . In the sense of the second principle , it is stated that our wide world has ' correlation structure ' . In the case of birds , for instance , wings co-occur with feathers frequently. So, people depend on correlation structure in the formation and organization of categories (Finch , 2005 : 266) . Taylor (1995: 44) indicates that Rosch , in 1975, writes a research paper entitled ' Goodness-of Example Ratings for Sixty Members of the Category Furniture ' and asks two hundred American students to classify the members of the furniture category on a scale and the results are shown in the table below :

Table(1): Goodness-of-Example Ratings for Sixty Members of the Category Furniture (adopted from Taylor , 1995: 44).

| Member | Rank | Specific Score | Member | Rank | Specific Score |
|--------|------|----------------|--------|------|----------------|
| Chair | 1.5 | 1.04 | Lamp | 31 | 2.94 |
| Sofa | 1.5 | 1.04 | Stool | 32 | 3.13 |

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| | | | | | |
|------------------|------|------|----------------|----|------|
| Couch | 3.5 | 1.10 | Hassock | 33 | 3.43 |
| Table | 3.5 | 1.10 | Drawers | 34 | 3.63 |
| Easy chair | 5 | 1.33 | Piano | 35 | 3.64 |
| Dresser | 6.5 | 1.37 | Cushion | 36 | 3.70 |
| Rocking chair | 6.5 | 1.37 | Magazine rack | 37 | 4.14 |
| Coffee table | 8 | 1.38 | Hi-hi | 38 | 4.25 |
| Rocker | 9 | 1.42 | Cupboard | 39 | 4.27 |
| Love seat | 10 | 1.44 | Stereo | 40 | 4.32 |
| Chest of drawers | 11 | 1.48 | Mirror | 41 | 4.39 |
| Desk | 12 | 1.54 | Television | 42 | 4.14 |
| Bed | 13 | 1.58 | Bar | 43 | 4.46 |
| Bureau | 14 | 1.59 | Shelf | 44 | 4.52 |
| Davenport | 15.5 | 1.61 | Rug | 45 | 5.00 |
| End table | 15.5 | 1.61 | Pillow | 46 | 5.03 |
| Divan | 17 | 1.70 | Wastebasket | 47 | 5.34 |
| Night table | 18 | 1.83 | Radio | 48 | 5.37 |
| Chest | 19 | 1.98 | Sewing machine | 49 | 5.39 |
| Cedar chest | 20 | 2.11 | Stove | 50 | 5.40 |
| Vanity | 21 | 2.13 | Counter | 51 | 5.44 |
| Bookcase | 22 | 2.15 | Clock | 52 | 5.48 |
| Lounge | 23 | 2.17 | Drapes | 53 | 5.67 |
| Chaise longue | 24 | 2.26 | Refrigerator | 54 | 5.70 |
| Ottoman | 25 | 2.43 | Picture | 55 | 5.75 |
| Footstool | 26 | 2.45 | Closet | 56 | 5.95 |
| Cabinet | 27 | 2.49 | Vase | 57 | 6.23 |
| China closet | 28 | 2.59 | Ashtray | 58 | 6.35 |

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| | | | | | |
|--------|----|------|-----------|----|------|
| Bench | 29 | 2.77 | Fan | 59 | 6.49 |
| Buffet | 30 | 2.82 | Telephone | 60 | 6.68 |

Prototype theory is different from the classical one in which a category is defined as a set of features , and an objects is regarded as a category member if it shows any features of that category . For example , the word ' bachelor ' is defined as [+ human] , [+adult] , [+ male] , and [-married] (Maienborn et al , 2011: 643-644) .

Prototype categorization model may be used in social context in which language is used or occurs. When people hear or learn a new instance or anything else , they become able to say who can use it and where. Language users are offered by prototype theory not only to know how and understand the way in which concepts are formed, but also to know how our social competences are achieved in the use of language (Wardhaugh , 2006 : 283).

1.3 The Prototype Features and the Basic Level

In prototype theory , a category member is defined by a group or cluster of attributes by which the most typical or ideal member is characterized . Besides, a given class member may not exhibit all the attributes . For instance , ostrich as opposed to robin which is seen and rated as prototypical of birds , does not show all the attributes . It is stated that the prototype is seen as a cognitive reference point , i.e a member of any familiar category that is rated and classified as a central one is termed ' prototypical member ' (Handke , 1995: 98-99).

Specific categories that are most widely used and identified quicker than any other are regarded to be more ' basic ' than other categories. Superordinate and subordinate are two kinds of categories within the basic level. Generally speaking ' furniture' , for instance, is a superordinate category, ' chair ' is the basic level and the subordinate category . The basic

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level category has more properties which are worth mentioning here and they are listed bellow:

1. For the purpose of interaction among the category members , it serves as the basis.
2. The entire category is reflected by the mental image of the basic level category.
3. Helpfully, it works as perceptual anchor (ibid).

It is indicated that a prototype can exhibit the following characteristics :

1. Centrality of typicality , which means the central category member is the typical one (prototype) .
2. Abstractness , from cognitive perspective , a prototype does not have concrete object .
3. Weighted attributes , the typical; category member shows the most significant attributes .
4. Independence and additive combination of weights , a category member is independent from other member in the same category by showing more or less significant attributes ([https:// www. Researchgate . net/ publication/ 267512473](https://www.Researchgate.net/publication/267512473)) .

1.4 The Social Context of Prototype

Prototype theory , in cognitive science, is a way of graded categorization, that is to say categorization is graded on a scale. Not all the categories are similar but some are more central than others . Pre-existing knowledge and different experiences that people have help them to produce stereotypes and to organize information. Smith (2002:13) defines cultural context as a group of factors that people share with those who live around them in a certain place . To a large extent , those factors are helpfully used by people to build strong relations . The elements of one cultural context , such as habits, behaviours, institutions, cognitive processes, modes of discourse, and material objects, are different from other cultural context(s). Language, social, and cultural factors can influence prototypes . For instance, pigeons are regularly seen by people in their daily lives and have

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the ability to fly while penguins are not so. A study of naming various members of categories , in North America and Europe, has taken place and the results of that study show that people discover more about what is different from and similar to their cultural norms. European people rank a bike in 4 out of 17 since they depend on a bike more than any other transportation means. By locating dissimilar objects in different categories , people can get knowledge about different cultures . Besides, prototyping is a study not only of categorization, but also of understanding various cultures ([https:// sits.psu.edu /psych256fa17001](https://sits.psu.edu/psych256fa17001)).

The question "Is there a relation between prototype theory and sociolinguistics or not?" can be answered by saying that prototype theory , in fact, is a cognitive linguistic term and it is not related to sociolinguistics. But by looking back at linguistic history , it is discovered that prototypes are , for social reasons, established differently. Sociolinguistics , as it is well-known, investigates the various relationships between language and society (Hudson, 1996: 1).

People may talk and use language differently because of their different social backgrounds ,and this reason makes them have different views of prototypes. Thus, the way in which people talk and use their language is influenced by some factors involved within sociolinguistics. What is more , where conversations take place, prototype theory is used within social situations. When a certain linguistic term is heard , people link that term with the most typical context (where it has to be used) or who brings it into the correct usage . prototype theory, in cognitive linguistic level, is used not only with concepts and categories , but it explains (from sociolinguistic level) how our social competence is achieved , in short, the relation between them is that prototype formation is determined by social competence, and how people talk is influenced by prototype (Coulmas ,1997:2).

Within the social context of prototype , there are regional factors that influence the process of prototype formation . Studying prototypes, in psychology, is an interesting subject. In the formation of prototypes , the social differences and the situations in which

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people talk with each other have a role to play. Our linguistic behaviours are influenced by the social factors and it is believed that the ideas and beliefs of people are affected by the regions where they live . The regional factors which account for the formation of prototypes are listed below:

1-Familiarity. It may give a possible explanation for the result with the members of the category. It is responsible for what is classified as more representative than others. It has a profound role to play in explaining sub-cultural variations of prototype. Take star fruits and jackfruit as an example , they are more familiar for those who live in the south of China than any other kind of fruits.

2-Commonality. The common instances within a category may influence the way in which people think and understand categories. Apple and pear, for example, are seen and eaten all over China , and they are the commonest fruits in the fruit category.

3-Knowledge of people. Regional differences in prototypes may be explained by language users' background knowledge. For instance, some people who live in the north of China do not know ,see , or hear about jackfruit that the southerners know it very well.

4- The way the instances are dealt with. This point seems quite ambiguous , actually what is meant is how people deal with the instances of a given category, for example, tomato in the south of China is eaten without being cooked whereas northerners mix it with eggs.

5- Culture and custom. The causes of different cultures and customs appear due to differences in geography, religion , history, and other things.

6- Scientific development. The regional differences within scientific development are not as clear as before especially , for instance, transportation means (Chiren,2013: 23-26).

2. Research Methodology

The steps followed in analyzing the gathered questions of the two shows are as follows: first , pointing out the category prototype , the factor (s), and the reason(s) why it is related

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to this category . Second, showing whether the category members are similar or not (similarity) . Third , mentioning or checking whether there are fuzzy boundaries among the members of the analyzed category or not. In the sense of centrality , the category members have different centrality degrees according to the points that each single memberscores or takes. In this study, the researcher takes or selects the questions which are similar in both shows . In this research , Chiren's 11 factors, that he mentions in his research entitled ' Studies in Sociology of Science ' , are used to show the reasons behind the variation and formation of the typical responses. The factors are familiarity , commonality , background knowledge , the way people deal with instances, culture and custom, scientific (technological) development, living environment , living experience , age , and religion. The typical category member or concept instance is rated as typical because of one or more of the given factors. The typical member shows more central degrees and is placed above all the other members of the same category. The non-typical members are assigned to the category by showing or sharing at least some features with the typical member.

3. Data Analysis and Results

The first four questions are taken from the American 'Family Feud TV show' , the rest of the questions are Iraqi ones which are taken from ' 'A'ilati Turbah TVshow ' .

1-Name something you would expect to see inside a police car.

- 1- Two-radio way 41
- 2- Police officer 15
- 3-Handcuffs 6
- 4- Criminal 4
- 5- Computer screen 4

The points beside each member of the category above make it clear if one has a look that the first member (answer) is the central member of the category under which the marginal members are mentioned according to the points they score. The central member is the category prototype since it is formed and represented mentally in the show participants' mind before anything else . The scientific (technological) American development helps the participant in mentioning the typical answer because America is one of the countries that has excellent scientists and scientific basis which lead it to the top . The first member is highly related to the category due to its presence inside the police car. The centrality degrees are not similar among the members but they are highly related and they show similarity degrees because the good " Two-way radio" member helps to include new similar members. One easily can decide that the second member is the closest member to the category prototype due to the points that appear next to it and it is a fact that police officers are in the police cars . The last member and the one above it are the poorest category members because of the points they have whereas the members " Guns and Handcuffs" are regarded as neutral ones. In addition, the attributes (closeness degrees) that the members (2,3,4,5,6,) exhibit give the show participants an appropriate chance to think about them. Finally , the last three member are fuzzy due to their close points.

2 -Name something people rub.

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| 1-Foot | 40 |
| 2- Head, bald head | 21 |
| 3- Coin, Penny | 14 |
| 4- Belly | 9 |

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The points that the first member scores make the member a typical one because it is formed and represented first in the show participants' mind before any other member. The experience and the living environment help the game player to mention the given typical member and putting it above all the marginal members . The centrality degrees among the members are not similar but vary because of the points that appear next to each member, the first member due to the points it has is the central or ideal member . The members are similar and

related to each other as most of them are body parts. The second member is the closest to the good example i.e. it shows great closeness degree to the category prototype. The third answer is an object that people use to rub any part of their bodies. The last answer is the poor category member because its points are less than those above it. Fuzzy boundaries do not have a role at all in this category.

3 -Name something people swallow without chewing.

- 1- pills 50
- 2- Ice- cream 10
- 3- Water 8
- 4- Oysters 6

It is clear that the first answer "pills" is the typical category member. It is at the beginning mentally represented in the mind of the show participants which helps him/ her to recall it before anything that people swallow pills without chewing. The idea of taking pills without chewing is more common (commonality) than the idea of taking them with chewing. Background knowledge plays a good role in creating the category prototype because it is known to all that pills are taken without chewing. The members show different centrality degrees and the first one is the central (prototype) of the

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category. The third given member in an American participants' mind is not as good as the first two members above it so it is a neutral one. The last member is the poorest member of the category as it has only six points. Moreover, all members show family resemblance since they are taken without chewing which is a feature that they share. Fuzzy boundaries have a role in this category specially in the second and the last two members because the idea of deciding which of them is more typical than the other is fuzzy, but the points solve this problem of fuzziness and gives each member its proper status.

4 -Name something your spouse had better not do when you are talking.

- 1- Interrupt 54

- 2- Ignore, leave me 22
- 3- Cry 8
- 4- Roll eyes 7

The first category member is the most representative answer of the given question above. "Interrupt" is the typical member because it is first formed and represented mentally in the mind of the participants before any other member. The factors of living experience that the participants have and the environment where they are surrounded by people who have good manners are the factors that help to form the category prototype " interrupt" and the second member as well . The degrees of centrality vary from one answer to another . The first answer is the central . The third given answer which has only eight points only is absolutely a category member as one talks, it is good to listen and show him/ her that you are focusing on what he/she talks about and avoid crying. Similarity degrees cover the given category members as they belong to the same category and really make someone upset when he/she talks. The third member and the one below it are fuzzy category members.

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1. **1. Mention something you may find in a police car.**

اذكر شئ قد تجده في سيارة الشرطة

- 1. The whistle 24
- 2. lights 21
- 3. Weapon 17
- 4. Handcuffs 14
- 5. Motto 11
- 6. Sticks 10

are objects that one may find in the Iraqi police car . Each member of the given category has its scored points according to its typicality degrees. The first member is the most central one because it is the category prototype , and it is created due to its commonality and familiarity because police men use it in the streets to warn the drivers to focus on their way while driving and it (the whistle) helps the police men in systemizing the roads . So , it is a useful thing for police men and they should have a whistle in their hands or cars to do their duties properly. The participants' background knowledge is also a possible reason that helps them to mention the first member before any other member, as the

participants know that having a whistle is beneficial for police men as they use it for the safety of ordinary people . The status of the members is not the same because of their different points . The similarity degrees cover the members because of their clear membership levels. In terms of fuzzy boundaries, the members are fuzzy which make them more similar inside the category scope.

اذكر شيء ما يحكه الناس..2.

٣٦ ١. الظهر

٣١ ٢- الجلد

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٢٩ 3. The Scalp 29

٦

٢ 4. Mobile Card 6

5. Sole 3

As, the first one which takes the highest number of points in comparison with the nearby responses is the prototype of the category . The commonality of rubbing the back has a role in placing the first response above all, that is to say, rubbing backs is more common in the view of the show participants than rubbing something else. The game players' knowledge make them mentioning the first member at first because they know that the one whose back needs rubbing cannot reach the named

2. Name something that people rub.

1. The back 36

2. The back 31

members have different status which is members have similarity degrees to show as they are similar in their memberships, all of them share the same property which is "rub". They are members within the category boundaries although fuzzy boundaries are present between the second and the third members , and between the last two named members as well.

اذكر شيئاً تبتلعه دون مضغ

3. What is the thing that you swallow without chewing ?

1. Soup 30

2. Water 25

3. Juice 19

4. Yogurt 16

5. Medicine 9

If one looks at the members of the given category, he/she can notice that they have different points that appear beside each of them which influence their typicality within the category scope. The first response is the category typical member . The culture is a significant factor that make the participants to say soup first rather than saying another thing because Iraqi people ,to a large extent, love to have soup as a starter with almost every meal . The commonality and familiarity of the first response have a great role in giving the participants an opportunity to name it, as it is a common thing that is taken without using our teeth to cut it then swallow it. The members, though have different status, are similar in their membership as they share the same property which is swallowing things without chewing . In the sense of fuzziness, the boundaries between the third and fourth members are fuzzy.

4.. سمي فعل أو تصرف يزعجك يصدر من شخص تتحدث معه

4. Name an action or behaviour that a person had better not to do

when you are talking.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|---|
| 1. Disbelief | 42 | help to identify which is the ideal or more |
| 2. Interruption | 30 | member. The first member is the category |
| 3. Mockery(sarcasm) | 23 | concepts as in the case of the first response |
| 4. Busy with something else | 5 | mentioning , forming and putting the first |
- category members were not the same category members. It is a fact that people who follow the Islamic religion are not allowed to bother or hurt anyone by saying or doing harmful things . Moreover, the environment where the participants are brought up does not permit them to denial or interrupt anyone ,and it is not lovely or

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polite to do so. The category members are different in their centrality degrees but similar in their membership and their function which is bothering the person who talks. In terms of fuzzy boundaries, the category members are not fuzzy.

4. Conclusions

The American 'Family Feud ' and the ' Iraqi A'lati Turbah' TV shows have been examined in this paper from a cognitive perspective. The factors or criteria that influence the formation of the typical category member have been discussed as well. In this work , although analyzing four questions for each show cannot give final results , this work comes with the following results :

1. A category member is different from one culture to another , and it is not agreed upon within a single community .
2. The prototypical category member is , to a large extent , influenced by culture , because culture covers or means different things such as history , geography , and religion etc which have a role in affecting the centrality of the typical member and the other members.
3. There is a strong relation between the typical category member and its social context. The relation is that there are factors that people share with other people who live near them. Those factors can create and build strong relations .
4. Each culture has its reasons to name and rate its prototype (s).

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