

## ❖ Schema, Culture, and Language: A Cognitive Linguistic Study ❖

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### Abstract

The current work is a comparative qualitative study between Iraqi and American participants. It aims at examining from the cognitive linguistic point of view the different types of frames highlighted by the participants when deciphering a short story sentence. A short story sentence (flash fiction) is a genre usually with an ambiguous end even after reading its brief words. Thus, the readers intend to comprehend the text by filling in the gaps which are open to multiple interpretations depending on their schema including knowledge, personal

experiences and perceptions. Some studies have investigated schema and its relationship to culture, yet no study using schema theory has examined how two groups from different cultures, the United States and Iraq, interpret the same text. The study adopts Fillmore's model (1982) Frame semantics in analyzing the reflectors' interpretations collected by a reflection test. Results have shown that the cognitive contexts, represented by the interpretations, are different although the given text is the same due to being produced by people with different schema in different cultures.

Key words: cognitive linguistics, schema, short story sentence, Frame semantics

المخطط والثقافة واللغة: دراسة لغوية ادراكية

الخلاصة

فحص من وجهة النظر اللغوية الادراكية انواع

مختلفة من الاطارات الفكرية التي ابرزها

المشاركون عند فك شفرة الومضة. الومضة هي

انها دراسة نوعية مقارنة بين المشاركين

العراقيين والامريكيين. تهدف الدراسة الى

مختلفة للنص نفسه باستخدام نظرية المخطط اعتمدت الدراسة في تحليل تفسيرات المشاركون على نموذج الدلالة لفلمور (١٩٨٢). اظهرت النتائج ان السياقات الادراكية متمثلة بالتفسيرات مختلفة على الرغم من ان النص المعطى هو نفسه وذلك لاختلاف خبرات وثقافات المشاركون.

## 1. Introduction

The relation among cognition, culture and language is often a dialectical one. Linguists such as Benjamin Whorf and Edward Sapir in their linguistic relativity hypothesis assure that language determines or influences the modes of thought and behavior according to the culture where that language is spoken. Many cognitive linguists such as Fillmore (1982) and Rumelhart (1997) confirm that linguistic information is processed by a number of cognitive systems such as attention, perception, and memory. Cognitive linguistics is the school of linguistics that studies the relationship between human language, mind and social - physical experience since language reflects thought and

نوع ادبي عادة مايكون لها نهاية غامضة بعد قراءة كلماتها القصيرة وبالتالي يعتزم القراء فهم النص عن طريق مليء الثغرات المفتوحة مما يسبب تفسيرات متعددة اعتمادا على المعرفة والخبرات الشخصية. تناولت بعض الدراسات نظرية المخطط والثقافة ولكن لم تبحث اي دراسة في كيفية تفسير مجموعتان من ثقافات

the features of human mind (Croft and Cruse, 2004). It believes that even the simplest sentence can be recognized by cognitive means. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) concluded that even the abstract concepts which are organized in human mind are based on concrete ones. According to them, the fundamental basis in cognitive linguistics is the meaning of the language that is dynamic, visionary, encyclopaedic and application oriented.

Ungerer and Schmid (1996) distinguish three different viewpoints in cognitive linguistics: Experiential view focuses on what is in the minds of speakers when producing and understanding words and sentences. According to this view, experience, and

knowledge are transferred to abstract concepts. Among the pioneers were Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999). The second view is the prominence view represented by Langacker's (1987, 1991a). It explains why one can figure an object out as a prominent figure from the background. Attentional view of language proposes that what one actually expresses reflects details of an event attracted his/her attention. The main concept in this approach is Fillmore's (1975) notion of "frame", which refers to an assemblage of the knowledge one has about a certain situation.

It is clear that the majority of cognitive linguists agrees that linguistic knowledge is an important part of one's cognition and thinking. They believe that language is motivated and grounded in experience, in bodily, physical, social, and cultural experiences because after all, "we are beings of the flesh" (Johnson 1992: 347).

## **2. The Role of Schema Theory in Cognitive Linguistics**

Schema theory confirms that human knowledge is arranged into units; including stored

information. According to this theory, schemata represent knowledge about concepts: the relationships that objects have with other situations, objects, events, actions, sequence of events, and sequence of actions. Thus, everyone has schemata (units of knowledge) for everything she/he experiences; these schemata become theories about reality and affect the way information is deciphered.

As stated by Rumelhart (1980:41),

Schemata can represent knowledge at all levels-from ideologies and cultural truths to knowledge about the meaning of a particular word, to knowledge about what patterns of excitations are associated with what letters of the alphabet. We have schemata to represent all levels of our experience, at all levels of abstraction. Finally, our schemata are our knowledge. All of our generic knowledge is embedded in schemata.

British Gestalt psychologist, Sir Frederic Bartlett is considered the first person who used the term "schema". He defines "schema" as an active organization of past reactions, or experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adopted organic response (Bartlett, 1932:201). Rumelhalt (1980), Carrell (1981) and Hudson (1982) clarify that schema theory explains how readers use their prior knowledge to comprehend a text. Anderson and Pearson (1984:42) explain it as "an abstract knowledge structure used for understanding".

One of the most important models in cognitive linguistics is Rumelhart's (1994) Interactive Model; it implies that if information of a source as word recognition is deficient, the reader would depend on another source of information, for instance, previous experience or contextual clues. Stanovich (1980) terms this kind of processing Interactive-Compensatory because the reader compensates for deficiencies. The sources which are concerned with concepts and their semantic relationships are called higher level stimuli; whereas sources dealing with

the printing word itself, its phonics, and sight words are called lower level stimuli.

Schema theory assumes that the meaning of a text is not carried by itself. Rather, it directs readers to how they should regain or build meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge which is called schema (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1980).

Many linguists as Goodman (1994) assure that meaning is represented by a writer in a text and constructed from a text by a reader. All of the writer, text, and reader influence the resultant meaning. Similarly, Rosenblatt (1994: 1078) states that "the same text takes on different meanings in transactions with different readers or even with the same reader in different contexts or times". Thus, the context of the text is obviously important in creating different meanings.

Anderson (1977:369) points out, "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well". There are two kinds of processing bottom-up which is activated by data from the text and top-down which starts with general to ensure these predictions (Carrelli and

Eiserhold, 1983). This idea is in accordance with Fillmore's notions of evocation and invocation that will be explained later.

Linguists classify schemas differently; for instance, Biocca (1991) has classified schemata into: social schema which is knowledge of the world concerning events, places and people, knowledge of the medium (textual schemas), narrative and genre schemas which organize knowledge about kinds of texts, and ideological schemas which mediate between 'real-world' (social) and 'textual' schemas.

Urquhart and Weir (1998:71) confirm that schema can be classified into: Formal schema and the other is content schema which is largely culture-specific. Culture is the total set of beliefs, social habits, attitudes, behavior, and customs of the members of a particular society". Rivers and Temperly (1978:202) describe cultural knowledge or schema as "socio-cultural meaning which springs from shared experiences, values and attitudes". Any kind of writing is a product of culture and must be interpreted under a cultural context. Finally,

linguistic schema which is the knowledge about grammar and vocabulary; it plays an important role in the understanding of a text. Eskey (1988:94) confirms that "good readers are both decoders and interpreters of texts, their decoding skills becoming more automatic but no less important as their reading skill develops".

Thus, one can conclude that the basic function of schema is providing the base or background for the construction of an interpretation of an object, event, or situation. Therefore, what may often happen that readers contribute more information than what is printed on the page.

Readers understand a text when they are capable of finding a configuration of schema which offers a coherent account for the text. If a reader fails, the text will appear incomprehensible and disjointed. As the sentences are read, schemata are activated, and refined or discarded.

The process of comprehending a text is like the process of constructing a theory; the more data becomes available, the more specified the theory will be. Bransford and Johnson

(1973) suggest that a comprehender may face the same problems that a detective faces in solving a crime. In both, there is a mystery. The listener's (or reader's) job is to find a suitable interpretation. In doing so, the listener uses his /her own prior knowledge and experience to create a plausible possibility.

Brown and Yule (1983:191) use "cohesion" and "coherence" and consider them as distinctive linguistic terms. As a matter of fact, in literature, even if there are instances of incoherence, readers try to fill in the gaps either through their own schema or through seeking information elsewhere. Cook (1994:10) points out that "schemata are essential to text processing, but can be both a potential barrier to understanding or enable a greater understanding of a text". Similarly, Culpeper et al (1998) confirm that for the sake of interpretation, human mind constructs different types of cognitive representations (meanings, codes, or features) that interpret the given linguistic input.

Thus, it can be said that what is comprehended is related to what is known and what had in one's minds. Finding some familiar

element helps activate the story, for example, that is recognized by that familiar element.

### **3. Cognition and Culture**

The process or act of obtaining knowledge, including perceiving, reasoning, recognizing, and judging is thought of as cognition (Gander & Gardiner, 1981). It involves knowing, thinking, categorizing, remembering, and problem solving. Language is a system of symbols that is used to communicate knowledge and information. Schema is the knowledge that exists within an individual's social and cultural communities; thus, any discussion of schema theory may lead to discussion of cultural knowledge. In fact, little work has been undertaken to bridge the gap between schema and the sociocultural perspectives.

Many linguists have tackled the transactional relationship between individual knowledge and cultural practice. Bartlett (1932) conducted experiments to explore schemas as cultural constructs in memory, and it is widely cited by schema theorists in the cognitive field (Saito, 1996). Bartlett's research points to schemas as more than

in-the-head phenomena and considers them as patterns extended to the cultural and social world. Bartlett explained the constitutive role of cultural experience in making sense for the individual (Saito, 1996: 2000).

Anderson et al (1977) claimed that different interests, experiences, and gender form the mental schemas in the human being's mind even though s/he is from the same culture. Thus, culture is more individualized than it is a solidified object as traditionally being conceived.

Vygotsky (1978) claimed that cultural influence, mental processes, and language are dynamic processes that occur simultaneously. Similarly, Fiske and Linville (1980) claimed that schema theory is relevant to the representation of social phenomena in a particular time and place and this is why it is more related to the dynamic view toward culture of a society and how meanings could be changed through history. Studies by Johnson (1981) and Carrell (1983) have shown that the text based on one's culture is easier to understand or comprehend than syntactically and rhetorically equivalent text based on a less familiar culture.

Sperber and Wilson (1986) in their Relevance Theory point out that the cognitive context for a human being is a set of assumptions stored in his/her brain. It varies among different individuals, since they live in different cultures and have different experiences. Accordingly, cognitive context refers to the knowledge and mental representations in individual's brain; therefore, it may be used alternatively in this study.

Campbell (1989:90) has explained that schemas may be reflected in many practices done by the individual within a culture. Many sociologists such as Gramsci (1990) believe that culture, embedded in everyday practices, and language limit people's ability to imagine options to existing arrangement.

Johnson (as cited in Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991) explains:

Meaning includes patterns of embodied experience and pre-conceptual structures of our sensibility (i.e., our mode of perception, and of interacting with other objects, events,

or persons). These embodied patterns do not remain private or peculiar to the person who experiences them. Our community helps us interpret and codify many of our felt patterns. They become shared cultural modes of experience and help to determine the nature of our meaningful, coherent understanding of our “world.” (p. 150)

Consequently, schema can be treated as a basic unit of analysis for any cultural study, as clarified by Carley (1991). Individuals experience culture as disparate bits of information and as schematic structures that organize that information (Rogoff & Chavajay 1995). The custom and culture are reflected in the language of a nation. Saussure makes it clear that the culture aspects the people live in are stamped on one’s mind forever as cultural schemata. Culture, as mentioned previously, includes feelings, values, religion, moral consciousness, and so on.

Language is the product of a society, so every aspect of language is associated with culture. It influences how to construct the information in a text (Hoenisch, 1998). Newman (1996: ix) emphasizes the importance of human experience and cognition in trying to explain linguistic structures.

Palmer (1996:291) reveals that

Linguistic meaning is subsumed within world view. Linguistic meaning is encyclopedic in the sense that it involves the spreading activation of conceptual networks that are organized chains and hierarchies of cognitive models. Language both expresses and constitutes world view but could only fully determine it in a culture that lacked other means of expression and communication.

Croft expressed this idea maintaining that “the sort of knowledge that is relevant to a linguistic expression’s meaning cannot be enumerated in such a way that all contexts of use can be predicted” (2000: 107). Context affects word meaning; John Firth maintains that there is a “general rule that each word



when used in a new context is a new word” (1957: 190).

When a word is found in a specific context, its meaning potential, or part of it, is activated, thereby providing an access point to a network of knowledge linked to the word in question (see Croft 2000). The network of knowledge accessed via a word’s meaning potential bears a close resemblance to the frame to which a word is linked. The activation of this meaning is a cognitive process initiated by other words in the context (Hanks 2000: 214). Gee (2004) goes further in confirming the connection between language and culture, stating that meaning does not exist in the form of words, but within one’s relationships among people, experiences, talk, actions, and all sorts of cultural knowledge. Gee (2008) believes that many people from different backgrounds use different words to express similar concerned matters; moreover, beliefs and values are the basis of the meaningful distinctions, i.e., choices and guesses.

It is worth mentioning that Fillmore (1982: 117-118) points out that very often the frame, or he calls it the background, against which the meaning of a word is defined and understood

is a fairly large slice of the surrounding culture. Further, this background understanding is considered as a ‘prototype’. Moreover, Fillmore (1994: 40) explains that a word cannot be understood if the accompanying beliefs are not understood. The frames that underlie word meanings should become the basis for the recognition of semantic relations among words, and among word senses. Barsalou (1992: 59) puts forward that frames play a major role not only in describing events, but also in planning them. That is, “when people plan events such as trips, purchases, social events, and repairs, frames often begin by partially activating a frame for the event being planned”

Cultural information and experiences are stored in schemas and support cultural identity. Once a schema is formed, it focuses one’s attention on experienced cultural aspects by assimilating, accommodating or rejecting the aspects which do not conform (Renstch, Mot & Abbe, 2009).

Culture shapes how people understand others, memorize, learn information, and make judgments or decide. Cultural differences in attention contribute to differences in

perception. Humans have schematic knowledge about various things such as marriage, color, pain, jealousy, joy, government, and religion. Some of these frames may be accessed by the virtue of living on earth. Others one obtains by being a member of a particular culture, in which people consciously or unconsciously respond to its institutions and values (Fillmore, 2011:314).

To sum up, both cognition and language are cultural phenomena. Consequently, they both contribute jointly to an individual's experience or schema. Obviously, anyone who does not have cultural knowledge may not share the intended associations. The frames one invokes are based on knowledge s/he has, not so much about the words and this will be discussed in the analysis section.

#### **4. A Frame-Based Approach**

In cognitive psychology, the term 'frame' has been used; at least since Frederic Bartlett (1932) who introduced schema theory (Fillmore, 1975: 124). In analyzing experiments of perception and memory retrieval, Bartlett concludes that it is easier to remember something which matches an

already existing mental image (Bartlett, 1977: 20). He defines a schema as "an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences" (1977: 201).

Through the following discussion, it would be clear that schema and frame are integrated terms. Frame has been used in linguistics by authors such as Harris (1946) as a syntactic category, as well as in Artificial Intelligence by authors, such as Minsky who calls it as 'scenario', i.e. "knowledge structures particularly designed for frequently recurrent event sequences" (1975: 212). He puts forward that our knowledge is stored in the memory in the form of data to construct different frames, representing models of situation. Every one acquires conventional knowledge from his/her experiences. This knowledge constitutes the different frames in his/her mind. When one of these frames is activated, the addresser will have a lot of assumptions about it. In linguistics, other terms are used to refer to the same structures such as 'scene' (Fillmore, 1977), 'script' (Schank & Abelson, 1977), 'experiential gestalt' (Lakoff &

Johnson, [1980] 2003), 'idealised cognitive model' (Lakoff, 1987), 'domain' (Langacker, 1987), 'scenario' (Palmer, 1996) and 'cognitive model' (Evans, 2007).

Martin (2001: 62) clarifies the idea of frames saying that in describing word meaning according to a frame-based approach, it can be considered as a knowledge structure (a conceptual knowledge frame), or as an organized chunk of knowledge that language users have allowing them to understand and also produce language. He assures that the lexicon should be no longer considered as a set of existing words, but as an organized knowledge bank. Thus, the meaning(s) of a word is (are) not separately stored in mind in the form of a list of features but rather as conceptually structured relations between the word in question and other words.

In cognitive linguistics, frames are regarded fundamental to the way humans organize their knowledge (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 65; Barsalou 1992: 21). Frames are situated in "the cognitive unconscious" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 116), so they are applied automatically. Furthermore, frames form the basis for one's syntactic

knowledge of, for instance, verbs since they decide what arguments may occur with a specific verb (Barsalou 1992: 28).

However, Fillmore is the first to adopt a semantic rather than syntactic definition of 'frame'; he defines it as a cognitive construct that represents the beliefs and structured knowledge related to specific situations. Fillmore puts it as

A system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits; when one of such structures is introduced into a text, or into a conversation, all of the others are automatically made available (1982: 11).

Fillmore's Frame Semantics (1982) is most commonly connected with Fillmore. It deals with the semantic representation that expresses the background contexts or perspectives. He calls this representation a frame, and describes it as follows:

The idea behind frame semantics is that speakers are

aware of possibly  
quite complex  
situation types,  
packages of  
connected  
expectations, that go  
by various names—  
frames, schemas,  
scenarios, scripts,  
cultural narratives,  
memes and the  
words in our  
language are  
understood with such  
frames as their  
presupposed  
background.

(Fillmore 2012: 712)

In this approach, Fillmore focuses on how words are associated with frames. The meaning of each word draws in the whole frame, and by using (or hearing) the word, the user necessarily activates the entire frame. A frame “represents the particular organization of knowledge which stands as a prerequisite to our ability to understand the meanings of the associated words” (Fillmore 1985: 224).

This approach was as a reaction to the feature list approach in which words have meaning in isolation; they have an inherent meaning that cannot be affected by changing contexts

.Accordingly, the category CHILD is defined as [+animate] [+human] [-adult] .

Fillmore’s version was expressed in a series of papers starting in the mid-1970’s. His distinguished example was the Commercial Event Frame. It is about a seller *sells* goods to a buyer; and how *buying* the goods *costs* a certain amount by *paying* a price *charged* by the seller. The italicized words are some of those which are connected with this frame.

Fillmore defines a frame as “a collection of linguistic forms or processes related in precise ways to specific cognitive schemata”, including choices of grammatical rules or linguistic categories that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes. These scenes are associated with linguistic frames, including interpersonal transactions, standard scenarios defined by the culture, enactive experiences, institutional structures and body image in people’s minds. (1976: 13&1975: 124). He states that “whenever we pick up a word or phrase, we automatically drag along with it the larger context in terms of which the word or phrase we have chosen has an interpretation” (1977:

74). Moreover, frames can be associated with other frames because of shared linguistic feature(s). Similarly, scenes can be associated with each other because they contain the same or similar participants and settings or because they occur in the same or similar contexts (Fillmore 1975: 124).

Fillmore (2011:314) puts it forward that cognitive frames are usually expressed as “slot-filler representations”, structures of interconnected roles with constraints on the possible fillers. Moreover, he adds that in Frame Semantics, meaning is expressed in terms of the cognitive structures (frames) that shape speakers’ understanding of the linguistic expressions. Frame Semantics is the study of how linguistic forms evoke or activate frame knowledge, and how these activated frames are integrated into the understanding of the texts that contain these linguistic forms (Ibid.:317).

Fillmore (1982:124) states that there are two ways in which cognitive frames help interpreting linguistic texts. On the one hand, the lexical forms and grammatical materials ‘evoke’ the relevant frames that exist as indices of those frames.

On the other hand, coherence is assigned to a text by ‘invoking’ a specific frame of interpretation. The evoked frames by the material in the text and the frames invoked by the interpreter are different. In the second case, an outsider has no reason to suspect. Accordingly, the interpreter invokes the (cognitive) frames that make the experience understood. A given linguistic element evokes the frame that contributes to the interpretation of the text. Thus, frame invocation is a cognitive act performed possibly unconsciously by the interpreter to make sense of existing information. By contrast, frame evocation is a cognitive experience that comes about by an interpreter’s responding to language-specific associations connecting linguistic signs with specific frames. The discovery and analysis of such associations constitute Frame Semantics.

To sum up, frames are structures of relations between words: whenever a specific word is used in a language, it activates a larger contextual framework in which the word is interpreted. The view of word meaning as something that is stored as a ready-made in the

minds without defining the context begins to be increasingly questioned. Instead, word meaning is seen as highly dependent on the surrounding context as well as on the encyclopedic knowledge (schema) a speaker and hearer has.

There are few studies which have investigated schema and its relationship to culture. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has so far used schema theory to examine how two groups from different cultures, the United States and Iraq, interpret one sentence short story. One sentence short story is a genre distinguished by its brevity and its open ends, causing gaps which for Iser, are the "points at which the reader can enter into the text, forming his own connections and conceptions and so creating the configurative meaning of what he is reading» (1974: 40). Thus, it is suitable to be used as a means to get the participants' interpretations, and to represent the main source for the data of the study.

The current study tries to answer the following questions:

1. Do the participants from the two cultures conceptualize the

sentence differently reflecting different frames?

2. Do the reflectors highlight their interpretations mainly by frames evoked by the linguistic elements (words) in the given text?
3. Does gender affect highlighting the three types of frames even though the reflector is from the same culture?

## 5. Methodology of the Study

The present study is a small scale qualitative research by nature. Qualitative research studies things in their natural settings, attempting to interpret or make sense of a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln,1994: 2). The current study is dedicated to investigate the role of the participants' (males and females) schema or frames in highlighting their interpretations, the data of the study, to the one sentence short story. As an ethical consideration, the participants were given the freedom to do the test after clarifying the objectives of the study. Further, anonymity, self-determination and confidentiality were ensured during the administration of the test and

report writing. As for the sample of the study, it consists of (26) participants arranged as such: (13) Iraqi (5male/8female) participants who were from the Department of English /College of Education/ University of Al-Qadisiyah, and (13) American (8male/5female) participants were from Spring International English Center / Arkansas University; the researcher had the chance to meet them while she was dispatched there for two months. The participants in each group belong to the same culture and they are nearly of the same age.

A pilot test was done to check the clarity of the test for the participants and its feasibility as well. It is worth mentioning that the few notes gained were taken into account when conducting the study in its final form. The data is analyzed depending on Fillmore's model Frame Semantics (1982). It is to be mentioned here that Leech and Short (2007: 139) make use of the notion of a "reflector" for "the person whose fictional point of view is represented"; a term that will be adopted in this study. In a reflection test, the question submitted to the participants as a means of triggering their interpretation is: "Reflect your understanding to

the following short story sentence: **"Her coffee was getting cold as she waited for him to miss her, while his cigarettes were running one after another trying to forget her"**.

To meet the objectives of the study, the researcher is to do the following steps:

- ❖ Selecting a number of short story sentences ;
- ❖ Preparing a cover letter to be submitted to jury members<sup>1</sup> to select one of these selected sentences that suits the nature of the study, and decide the number of the participants;
- ❖ Choosing a number of participants who are willing to do the test;
- ❖ Categorizing their answers into three types of frames; evocation, invocation, and reflection, as indicated in Fillmore's model;
- ❖ Coding these three types of frames using colours;
- ❖ Submitting the analysis to raters<sup>2</sup> to maintain objectivity;
- ❖ Discussing the results obtained from the analysis; and

<sup>1</sup> The jury members are Prof. Majeed U.jadwe (PhD.), Prof. Basim Nashmi, and Prof. Muna Alalwan (PhD.).

<sup>2</sup> The raters are Asst. Prof. Rana H. Al-Bahrani (PhD.), Asst. Prof. Jinan Ahmad, and Asst. Prof. Huda Hadi.

- ❖ Deriving the conclusions that address the objectives previously set.

### 5.1 Analysis

The researcher chooses the Yellow color to refer to the linguistic frame evoked by the given linguistic forms, which contribute to the interpretation of the text due to Fillmore's Semantic Frame (1982:124), "frame evocation is a cognitive experience that comes about by an interpreter's responding to language-specific associations connecting linguistic signs with particular frames". The pink color refers to the cognitive frames invoked by the interpreter that enable the experience to be understood **"Her coffee was getting cold as she waited for him to miss her, while his cigarettes were running one after another trying to forget her"**.

It is about a woman who is sitting somewhere; she is not drinking her coffee because she is absent minded, thinking about her lover and forgets everything

Consider Table (1) for the Iraqi reflectors and Table (2) for the American reflectors:

since "frame invocation" according to Fillmore (Ibid.:124) is a cognitive act performed possibly unconsciously by the interpreter to make sense of some given information". It can be noted that most of the invoked ideas or expressions are not mentioned in the given short story sentence. The green color refers to the reflectors' own attitudes which mirror his/her culture. For the sake of modeling, the following are the coded frames of one of the interpretations for the one sentence short story used in this study:

else. Coldness refers to her feelings; when a woman feels lonely and misses or needs a specific person, she feels empty and cold. She may make unforgettable mistake so that he could not forgive her or stay with her any longer or it is a one- side love.



**Table (1) Iraqi Fe(male) Reflectors**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Female Participants' Interpretations</b>	<b>Male Participants' Reflections</b>
<b>1.</b>	It is a love story but there is the idea of the important role of time (her coffee is getting cold) because when I give you few minutes, this time will never come back; time is running from our hands just like the sand. The man was worried; therefore, he was smoking. He was trying to forget her because she might not be faithful to him. I think that he should not forget her but forgive her because life is a stage and we are actors.	It is about a lady waiting for her lover in a café; she ordered a cup of coffee. The man somewhere, was smoking cigarettes one after the other quickly in order to forget her. There is a failure relationship breaking up and instead of solving the problem, they tried to avoid each other and fight. The problems can be solved if we want to. What we have to do is to talk, listen, and find solutions.
<b>2.</b>	The story is about not only two lovers; it may refer to many human relationships such as a relationship between a brother and a sister; mother and a son, a father and a daughter, or a manager and an employee. There is the problem of misunderstanding; we judge without listening or talking about our problems. We have to give others the chance to be changed and to correct his/her mistakes since all of us make mistakes and I think the right key for happiness in any relationship.	The story is about a relationship between a man and a woman but both have ego. The woman is not trying to approach her beloved and so does the man. The man should show some care, emotions, love and should talk to her, then she will decide if he is suitable or not. If she is interested in him, she will show that by eye-contact smiles and will ask him personal questions. This man is really in love with her but his ego prevents him. They should talk to each other.
<b>3.</b>	It is about a lady waiting for her	It is about two characters (man

	<p>beloved husband who has the same feeling. There is a problem and each of them waits for the other to come and say sorry but their pride prevents them. OR</p> <p>The lady does something wrong and this disappoints the man and makes him spend his time smoking as a way to forget what had happened; she also feels sorry and waits for him to come and drink a coffee with her.</p>	<p>and woman). They are divorced. The man is smoking quickly to forget her and he really loves her. I can feel the sadness in his heart. Similarly, she has broken heart. There is the idea of suffering; they are waiting for each other to come back. We need to love and understand each other; life is shorter than we think. Life without love, respect and loyalty is so cold and dark.</p>
4.	<p>It is about a woman who is sitting somewhere; she is not drinking her coffee because she is absent minded, thinking about her lover and forgets everything else. Coldness refers to her feelings; when a woman feels lonely and misses or needs a specific person, she feels empty and cold. She may make unforgettable mistake so that he could not forgive her or stay with her any longer or it is a one- side love.</p>	<p>It is a story about a couple in love but they are separated now. They miss each other and the reasons of separation are beyond their circumstances. The girl is waiting for him and her coffee is getting cold. He feels disappointed and wants to forget her; he smokes a lot of cigarettes. It is clear that she has left him because of a specific reason.</p>
5.	<p>It is about a woman waiting for her husband; there was a problem and she prayed for God to meet him again but he wished to forget her because she has broken his heart. She did not respect him. I think it is better to face our problems and ourselves, so the man should go and meet his beloved face to face to solve the problem nevertheless this will</p>	<p>It is a love story. They reached a point of separation. However, there was a hope on one side; she was certain that he would miss her and be back. The coldness of her coffee refers to the long period of waiting which may last forever. The running of the man's cigarettes refers to the difficulty and conflict that this</p>

	lead to separation.	man lives in.
6.	<p>It is a story of two lovers. He loves her so much but he takes his decision to break the relation but the girl hopes that he will miss her and come back to her.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>It is a story between a father and his daughter or a mother and her son. The daughter makes a mistake and she hopes that her father would forgive her.</p>	
7.	<p>It is a story about two who are in love. They are separated for two reasons; either they had to leave each other because their families refuse their getting married or one of them is unfaithful to the other. However, they miss each other. Her coffee is cold because she is sick and tired of waiting him. There is the idea of waiting and forgiveness. OR</p> <p>The man was stressed because he may have a deadly disease or he may lose a close person and he did not want to tell his beloved about his stress and hopelessness, leaving her waiting.</p>	
8.	<p>It is about two lovers. The woman is waiting for her lover or husband. She loves and misses him and she is waiting for him forever. The picture of his cigarettes refers to that he is trying to forget her and he still loves her. Sometimes a wife feels that her husband may not love</p>	

	her and that happens in general but in fact he loves her.	
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**Table (2) American Fe(male) Reflectors**

No.	Female Participants' Interpretations	Male Participants' Reflections
1.	It is a story of miscommunication between a boyfriend and a girlfriend or a man and a woman who are attracted to each other and getting to know each other but they are not able to communicate their feelings. She is purposely making him wait for her while he is trying hard to dismiss her from his life. Because of their negative action, they may be missing out an opportunity.	It is about a different perspective of the female and the male. The female wants to stay with him but he wanted to be apart from her. The reader envisions little animated cigarettes running.
2.	It is a story of a woman who is sitting on a coach in silence with her cup of cold coffee. Her husband may be sitting next to her in the same room smoking in silence. She is upset for not loving her in the way she expects to be loved. He was not romantic enough or did not pay her enough attention. She has stopped communicating with him, which was interpreted as coldness and scorn. He too does not feel loved. His reaction is to stop thinking about the relationship and flee from it in the future. If the couple continues to act this way, they both will grow bitter with resentment. However, if one steps forward and show love, their relationship has a chance of surviving.	The story is about a man and a woman who were dating but for some reason they break up with broken hearts. As the woman waited with her hot cup of coffee, she longed for him and she forgot about the coffee. The man, thinking of her, was trying to forget about her by smoking one cigarette after the other. Both miserable, they wait in vain.
3.	This sentence gives us a glimpse of a long story. Either it is about a love story gone wrong- two lovers have faced obstacles that caused them to be apart. OR It is about an absent father who spends his whole life running from the responsibility of having a child, and a daughter who grows up wondering if her father might ever come back to claim her.	It is about a relationship between a man and a woman for a long time. The woman did something wrong that she regrets. OR The man made a choice to leave but he did not want to because guys often feel honor-bound to leave even if they do not want to. The man is nervous and needs to calm down and the woman has shut down completely.
4.	It is about a woman who was sitting around waiting for a man to feel sad that he was not with her and came back to her and confessed that he missed her. OR	It is a couple that has separated but not for the first time. Her coffee was unattended to suggest that she is relatively calm and expected he would come back. While his chain smoking suggests

	It is about a woman who was sitting in a chair with an apple on her head. The man sets up his archery equipment which took him an excessive amount of time, which led to the woman's coffee getting cold. His goal is to hit the apple not her body. That is why she is waiting him to miss her instead of hitting her body.	agitated state compared to her calmness. Their relationship has repeatedly drawn him back and he suspects this time will not be different. His chain smoking has become automated; something happens without conscious effort like the running of a car engine.
5.	I got a silly image in my mind of little cigarettes personified with arms, legs, and faces. The cigarettes were sad over the loss of their cigarette friend. They miss her so much that the only way of getting her out of their minds was to exercise running.	The sentence is a literary poetic one. It comes from a work of fiction. Its grammar helps to create a vivid picture in the reader's mind. There is a metaphorical use of vocabulary.
6.		<p>It is about a relationship that is not working and probably ending. It is lopsided or uneven. The female seems to still in love and waiting for something that the male is unable or unwilling to give. She is distracted and her life seems to be "on hold" as she waits for what will happen while he simply waits for memories of the "good times" to fade. OR</p> <p>Perhaps it is just that the relationship is impossible even though they both want it. For example, their parents forbid the relationship (although this rarely happens in the USA) or one of them has had to move far away for school or work. Her way of coping is to dream that there is still a possibility everything will work out while his way is to miserably wait for the pain of missing her to pass. OR</p> <p>A third way of seeing this sentence is that the female is the one who holds power in the relationship. She is manipulating him and knows that sooner or later he will come back; she is a</p>

		cold-hearted user of men. He is a miserable man that he cannot stay away from her although she is bad for him. Sooner or later he will be back for more abuse...all she has to do is waiting.
7.		It is about a couple who are both dwelling on a situation neither of them is willing to do anything to resolve. It might be helpful if they found healthier ways of dealing with their problems than allowing in self-pity and chain smoking.
8.		It is a classic young adult breakup story. They both miss each other but neither will initiate contact. She is sitting in a street side café on an overcast day. She watches the happy couples pass by, each time reinvigorating her feelings of loneliness and loss. He was standing on the balcony of his rundown apartment; he looked like he has not been sleeping well. They both will deal with their sadness in time, but for now they are stuck in the past ad dreaming of what might have been.

## .2 Results and Discussion

The study has led to the following results:

1. In general, the reflectors conceptualized the sentence differently reflecting different frames. On the denotative level, for instance, the participants were familiar with the linguistic elements used. Such elements represent the basis for activating different types of frames;
2. All participants in both cultures managed to activate

different types of frames that have been coded differently by the researcher using different colors. For instance, the frames that reflect the linguistic elements used by the participants are coded in yellow throughout the analysis. The invocation frames coded in pink, on the other hand, are the prevailing ones. However, the frames coded in green are the same or more than the pink

specifically for the female participants.

**3. Speaking of the Iraqi females' answers, it has been revealed that:**

- a.** A number of Iraqi female participants, i.e., 62%, accused the woman of being unfaithful and of being the cause of the problem in the story. For them, the woman is the one who is responsible for committing an unforgettable mistake which makes the man disappointed. This deciphering could be attributed to the masculine dominance in the Iraqi community;
- b.** Moreover, 75% of the participants used an emotional expressive language when conceptualizing the image of love between the husband and wife. That is; the relation between man and women in this short sentence story was depicted in their highlighted frames as that of husband and wife, not as a dating couple. As a case in points is the frame of a woman who prayed for God to meet her husband. On the other hand, 25% of them reflected the frame of

a father and a daughter or a mother and a son. Such deciphering reflects the role of culture on shaping one's mind and conceptualizations; and

- c.** Further, 62% of the participants expressed their attitudes and own feelings, as shown in the green coded frames. For instance, they showed the importance of time, forgiveness, the idea of misunderstanding the other, how one should be given the chance to express him/herself freely and clearly, and of the normal cultural norms and traditions, such as that of the fundamental role of parents in their sons and girls' marriage in the Iraqi culture;
- 4.** As for the males' answers, it has been shown the following:
  - a.** The yellow coded frames are inclined to be more than the pink ones. This indicates that the male participants evoked their frames depending on the linguistic signs;
  - b.** Additionally, 100% of them reflect their attitudes and own values as shown in the green coded frames. Cases in point are the

following: the values and morals of the Iraqi men towards women, the idea of divorce associated with sadness, and suffering, the idea of ego, coldness connecting with the woman's waiting and the running of the man's cigarettes with the conflict he suffers;

- c. All of the participants, i.e., 100%, referred to the characters in their frames as couples, meaning lovers, not as a husband and a wife though they belong to the same culture to that of the females'.
- d. None of the Iraqi male participants produced more than one conceptualization to the same short story sentence; and
5. None of them pictured the woman in the story as the negative partner in the relationship, on the contrary of the Iraqi female participants. This could be attributed to the honored social status of wives for most of the Iraqi husbands.
6. Speaking of the American reflectors, it has been illustrated that both males and females

conceptualized the sentence differently using the linguistic elements which represent the basis for activating different types of frames. For example, the evocation frames coded in yellow throughout the analysis, are the prevailing ones for the males whereas those coded in pink are the prevailing ones for the females. However, it is clear that the green coded frames are less than the other two frames in all the American participants' reflections.

7. As far as the American females' answers are concerned, it has been shown the following:
  - a. Sixty percent of the female participants reflected more than one story conceptually. This is in accordance with what Fillmore (1975: 124) states that frames can be associated with other frames because of the shared linguistic feature(s), containing similar participants and settings or because they occur in the same or similar contexts;



- b. All of them express their own attitudes and feelings briefly;
  - c. The activated frame of a woman who purposely makes the man wait for her not the opposite is shown by 20% of the female participants;
  - d. The slot-filler representations (cognitive frames) are clearly shown by 20% of the participants, who managed to add delicate details concerning the frame of the romantic relationship between the husband and wife. The rest of the female participants, i.e., 80% reflected the frame of a couple of man and a woman;
  - e. Twenty percent of the female participants activated the frame of a father leaving his daughter away; and
  - f. Twenty percent of them created dynamic strange story of little personified cigarettes, using some of the words in the short story sentence (cigarettes, miss, her, and running).
8. As for the American males' answers, it has been revealed the following:
- a. Twenty five percent of the male participants used their own expressions to highlight more than one entire story briefly;
  - b. Seventy five percent of the participants activated the frame of a woman and a man fallen in love with different details; each ended with brief personal attitudes not as a husband and a wife. On the other hand, 25% did not mention what kind of relationship was that between the two in the story'
  - c. Further, the woman is accused by 33.33% of the male participants of being the cause of the break up between the two;
  - d. Twenty five percent of the males created fanciful frames of animated cigarettes and a running of a car engine; and
  - e. Twenty five percent of the participants produced frames that are somehow specified for the American community, reflecting as a result the traditions in the USA culture. This confirms the important role of culture in shaping individuals' frames.

## Conclusions

The paper has come up with a number of concluding remarks:

1. Generally, the participants from the two cultures managed to highlight different interpretations to the same one sentence short story; consequently, different frames are the result. This shows the high effect of the schema in mapping their mental representations; and how the generic knowledge, including one's experiences, practices, perceptions, language, and cultural concepts stored in his/her mind, is embedded as frames;
2. The conceptual meanings of words are conceptualized based on the stored frames. These frames are the basis for establishing word senses; thus, the frames invoked by the participants are based mainly on their generic knowledge, their schema, not so much on the linguistic elements which are represented by the evoked frames;
3. Although many of the reflectors in both groups shared the same frames, they generated different cognitive

contexts which are clear in the different details highlighted by females and males within the same group. In addition to the role of gender in forming their frames, this enhances the idea that meaning is conceptual and is individual proper; and

4. The role of culture was clear in forming the different and sometimes specific frames by both the Iraqi and American participants. This confirms that one's schema is culturally-specific: and cultural differences influence the content of his/her mind. The Iraqis were more expressive than the Americans and their reflections were longer than the other group. This can be due to their different attitudes, values, and morals. Further, the Iraqis were emotional whereas the Americans were practical, direct, and brief and sometimes they used fanciful and unreal images in their interpretations as it is shown in their reflections.

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