Accessible Politics: Compression & Representation in Visual Blends in 'The Citizen's Manual for Understanding Politics'

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Abstract

Before the 'Lotus Revolution' 2011 in Egypt, getting into politics was one of the Egyptian taboos. However, after the revolution, political issues have become an everyday topic of laymen. 'The Citizen's Manual for Understanding Politics' campaign on You Tube attempts to simplify political terms to make them accessible to almost everyone. In the present study, I follow an eclectic approach to show how 'Blending' is used in animated video clips to criticize regimes in the Arab World. Conceptual Blending, also called conceptual integration, is a general theory of <u>cognition</u>. 'Blends' are shown to aid comprehension of several vital links between the language and the pictures in the clips, whose basic surface function is to simplify political matters (terms, concepts...etc) as the production team of the clips clearly states. However, at a deeper level, the clips criticize political states in a humorous manner both linguistically and visually.

Key Words: Blending Theory; visual blends; compression; representation; political icons; political symbols; visual metonymies; cultural stereotypes; visual personification.

1. Introduction

Being in a world dominated by visual forms of communication, the researcher analyzes some video clips within a campaign called *'The Citizen's Manual for Understanding Politics'* in the light of Blending Theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). The campaign is launched as a reaction to the social change taking place in Egypt after the Lotus Revolution in 2011. Before the revolution, discussing politics was considered a taboo. However, nowadays political issues have become an important topic of everyday conversations among family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. *'Qabila'* – literally meaning 'a tribe'- launched a series of video clips on You Tube entitled دليل المواطن لفهم السياسة (دمفس) *'The Citizen's Manual for Understanding Politics'* in an attempt to simplify political terms for laymen. *Qabila* is a group of young artists who introduce their site on Facebook page as "مجتمع الأفكار و التعبير عنها a society of ideas / thoughts and their expression / representation" [my translation]. As we are "...entering a historical epoch in which the image will take over from the written word" (Gombrich, 1996, p. 41), this paper investigates some aspects of visual blends in an attempt to show how the producers rely on conceptual relations to simplify political terms. Such visual elements aim at concretizing abstract concepts. The clips make use of culturally specific visual elements to facilitate the understanding of political concepts.

The clip falls into the genre of *Info graphics*. Information graphics or info graphics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present complex information quickly and clearly (Newsom & Haynes, 2004; Smiciklas, 2012). The clips employ video footage and/or animation technology to create the illusion of motion. However, the focus of this paper is to show how blending can

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account for the processing and understanding of visual metaphors.

2.   Theoretical Background

Blending theory (BT) or Conceptual Integration Theory (Fauconnier &Turner, 2002) is a general theory of meaning construction. BT "...gives insight into our way of thinking, creating, and understanding of the world around us" (Dzanic, 2007, p. 170).   Similarly, Dancygier (2006) states that:

> The Framework aligns itself with cognitive approaches to the construction of meaning in that it treats language expressions (but also visual images, sounds, gestures, and all other forms of human expression) as prompts which the human mind uses in an act of meaning construction and comprehension.   (p.6)

According to Turner and Fauconnier (1995, p. 186), blending can be "...detected in everyday language, idioms, creative thought in mathematics, evolution of socio-cultural models, jokes, advertising, and other aspects of linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior". Hence, conceptual integration theory "...emerged as a powerful theory that can account for a variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic phenomena" ((Dzanic, 2013, p. 326).

Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p. 47) state that, "[b]lends arise in networks of mental spaces". The network model of conceptual blending consists of four mental spaces, as listed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002, pp. 41-42), comprises: two input spaces, a generic space and a blended space. Creating such a network "...involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backwards to inputs, recruiting a new structure to the inputs or the blend, and

running various operations in the blend itself" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 44). Thus, as Palko□ (2009, p. 2) explains:

> In Blending co-existence and co-operation of at least four separable *mental spaces*: two or more *input spaces*, containing information about conceptual domains considered relevant for the on-going communication, a *generic space*, with abstract structures, which are common to all input spaces, and a *blended space*, where selected information from all input spaces is projected, and where unexpected, new meanings can emerge.

Emergent structures, then, arise from three processes: *composition, completion* and *elaboration* (Coulson & Oakley, 2000; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). Stockwell (2002, p. 98) summarizes these processes as follows:

> **Composition**: new relations become apparent in the blend.
>
> **Completion**: frame knowledge fits the blend to wider knowledge.
>
> **Elaboration**: 'running the blend' through its emergent logic.

It's through the process of **composition** that the blend often develops relations that are not found in the various input spaces. Fauconnier and Turner (2002), explain these items using the classical example of the Buddhist Monk riddle. In this riddle, people are asked to calculate when and where would the Buddhist monk come to the same spot on the mountain. The Monk began at dawn one day walking up a mountain, he reached the top at sunset, and mediated at the top for several days. One dawn he began to walk back to the foot of the mountain, which he reached at sunset. While making no assumptions about his starting or stopping or about his pace

during the trips, there should be a place on the path which he occupied at the same hour of the day on the two separate journeys.   In this blend, composition produces two individuals making two trips on the same day and on the same way, despite the fact that each input space has only one individual. **Completion** adds a novel structure to the blend, so in the famous Buddhist Monk riddle, "...the composition of two monks on the path is completed so automatically by the scenario of two people journeying toward each other that it takes some thinking to see that the 'journeying toward each other' scenario is much richer than the 'two monks' composition" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 48). Finally, through the process of **elaboration**, we 'run the blend' in order to understand its emergent meaning (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). This running of the blend helps it to have a life of its own and to develop new meanings that are not found in the separate input spaces (Dancygier, 2005). In the Buddhist Monk, we reach the emergent structure which is the "encounter" between the two monks through elaboration (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

According to Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002, 2006), there are multiple kinds of integration networks. They discern between four types of blending networks, namely, simplex, mirror, single-scope, and double-scope networks. **Simplex networks** often contain two input spaces; the first input space contains a frame with roles, while the other contains values. There is always a harmony or accordance between the frame in the first input space and the values in the other and so there is no clash between the inputs. The principal feature of **mirror networks** is that all the spaces have the same organizing frame. The Buddhist Monk is an example of mirror networks. In the Buddhist Monk network, all the spaces; the generic space, the two input spaces, and the blend, share the same organizing frame of a 'man walking along a mountain path'. Therefore, mirror networks do not have any conflicts between

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the input spaces because they have the same organizing frame. In **single-scope** or one-sided networks, the input spaces have divergent and varying organizing frames. One of these frames is projected to form the blended space. The most important characteristic of single-scope networks is that the organizing frame of the blend develops from the organizing frame of only one of the input spaces. Because the organizing frames in single-scope networks are inconsistent, there is often a clash between the input spaces. The most advanced form is the **double-scope** or two-sided networks (Turner, 2006). Double-scope integration network combines inputs with inconsistent and varying organizing frames, while the blend has a unique organizing frame which is the result of the integration of the previous organizing frames. The blend also has a unique emergent structure which is different from what is found in the inputs. This inconsistency between these organizing frames may create rich clashes. These clashes create imagination and make the blend more creative (Turner, 2006). In addition to this, "it is because of the clash rather than in spite of it, that the meaning ... of the scene can emerge" (Dancygier, 2006: 11). However, these four types of integration networks are not separated. They complement each other. There is always continuity between them. This indicates that "blending is a constant mental activity: we blend again and again, building blends out of earlier blends, blends all the way down" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 146).

Selective projection is one feature of blending, whereby only few elements and relations from the inputs are projected to a blend (Fauconnier & and Turner, 2002). Selective projection plays a role in establishing the implied meaning (Dancygier, 2006). Closely related to selective projection is the process of partial mapping between elements in different input spaces (Fauconnier & Turner, 2000). According to Fauconnier and Turner (2000, p. 298), "selective projection

from different related spaces and integration in the blend provides an exceptionally strong process of compression".

Compression to human scale of reality is another extremely important feature of Blending which is highlighted by Fauconnier and Turner (2002). Compression of vital conceptual relations is described by Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p. 108) as "one of the central engines of human insight and understanding". It is possible, for example, to compress a whole group by choosing one member as a representative, "…pretending that there is a homogeneous nature, experience, and behavior for all the members of the group" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 117). This compression helps in "transforming diffuse and distended conceptual structures that are less congenial to human understanding so that they become more congenial to human understanding, better suited to our human-scale ways of thinking" (Turner, 2006, p.18). Similarly, Fauconnier (2005) states that "…a central feature of integration networks is their ability to compress diffuse conceptual structure into intelligible and manipulable human-scale situations in a blended space" (p.523). Among such compressible vital conceptual relations are change, identity, time, space, representation, part-whole, role, analogy and disanalogy (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). *Change* is a vital relation that can link either two separate ideas to each other or a group of ideas to one another. Mentally, a young tree and an old tree are connected by a vital relation of change. In this case, we constitute a mental space for the young tree and another for the old tree and these two mental spaces are connected by a vital relation of change. However, change can occur inside a single mental space. *Identity* is an essential vital relation without which other relations lose their meanings. Compression and decompression of identity is a healthy phenomenon for the human brain. In the famous Buddhist Monk example (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), the monk in the two input spaces- representing the journey

upwards and the other journey downwards- is the same. This is a simple and easy kind of identity association. However, connections of identity through mental spaces can be very complex. According to Fauconnier & Turner (2002), *time* is "a Vital Relation related to memory, change, continuity, simultaneity, and nonsimultaneity, as well as to our understanding of causation" (p.96). *Space* is "a vital relation that brings inputs separated in input spaces into a single physical space within the blended space" (Dzanic, 2007, p. 176). When we see something in a place and imagine that it is in our home, we are linking or compressing two distinct spaces. *Representation* is one of the vital relations that can be compressed in blends. As Turner (2006) explains: "Mary and a picture of Mary are connected through conceptual relations of *representation* and *analogy*" (p.17). According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p. 97), blending of *part-whole* vital relations is "...more common than we might expect". They explain that human beings often regard the face of a person as if it is the whole person, as we look at a photo of a person's face and say " 'That's is Jane Doe,' not 'That is the face of Jane Doe' ". *Role* is another vital relation discussed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002). Roles often have values. For example, Lincoln is a role with the value president and Elizabeth is a role with the value queen. Inside mental spaces and across them, roles are often related to their values. *Analogy* relies on Role-Value compression. That is to say when two distinct blended spaces have similar frames; they are connected by a vital relation of analogy. For example, Stanford and Harvard represent two similar blending networks. Both of them share the same frame (American university frame) with the same role (respectable American university). Thus, the two networks are connected by a vital relation of analogy. *Disanalogy*, on the other hand, "... is often compressed into Change" (p.99). For instance, we can have two networks where one species of animal is changed into another.

3. Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1- How are political terms simplified by using metaphors both visually and verbally?
2- How does blending account for the processing of visual representation of politics?
3- What kind of vital relations are compressed in the process of understanding the visual blends?

4. Analysis

In the clips, clues to metaphorical interpretation are not merely pictorial, since the operating metaphors are triggered by the words of the voice-over. The clips are like talking children's books, with instant animated illustrations. Animations are like cartoons which "...are by default composites of symbolic modes, constantly crossing the image-text boundary" (Palko□, 2009, p. 3)

The first example comes from the episode entitled الفصل بين السلطات 'Separation between Authorities'. The voice over defines السلطة authority as:

"...هى الجهة اللى بتملك القدرة على التأثير فى سلوك الآخرين باستخدام القوة او العقوبة..."

'the entity that possesses the power to affect the behavior of others either by using force or punishment' [my translation]

Screen Shot (1)

In this screenshot, the main terms are presented in the form of a triangle. Authority followed by a question mark السلطة؟ is written in a bigger font. Then the answer follows in a smaller font in the shape of a triangle, with 'influence' التأثير on top and the two methods of influence, القوة 'force' and العقوبة 'punishment' at the base of the triangle. القوة 'Force' is also metonymically represented by a drawing of a cane / baton. All other forms of force and different weapons are compressed into the cane as a representative. Similarly, العقوبة 'Punishment' is metonymically represented by a drawing of hand cuffs. Other forms of punishment are also compressed into the hand cuffs representing prison. Thus, metonyms are visually established as represented in Screen Shot (1).

The clip proceeds to simplify the concept of authority through a simile that is triggered by the voice over

"...زى الأب، و هو الجهة اللى بتعمل لها الف حساب قبل ما تعمل اى حاجة مش تمام و لو طالبة معاك أوى تعملها هتستخبى من الجهة دى قبلها..."

'...just like a father who is the authority you keep in mind before you do anything wrong, and if you badly want do it, then you have to hide first.' [my emphasis]

This part requires the viewer to blend several levels as we can see in Screen Shot (2). The main metaphoric mapping in this part of the clip is between authority and a strict father, but embedded in it are several metonymic mappings tightened together. This part compresses a great amount of cultural information, through the compression of several vital relations, in an attempt to simplify the concept of authority for laymen. Cultural stereotyping is a process whereby "...the preference for certain clothes and objects makes it possible to generalize some recurrent features and later use them as prompts for a whole socio-cultural group...which is a kind of metonymic identity compression" (Palko□, 2009, p. 8). First of all, all fathers are compressed into the drawing of a male face. Thus, the compression of both representation and part-whole relations is employed. Role is another important vital relation

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that is visually compressed in this blend. The different roles of a father being a role model, a loving caring protector, and a provider for his family are all compressed into the role-punisher. The strict patriarchal cultural stereotype is presented metonymically through the use of the glasses representing monitoring, and
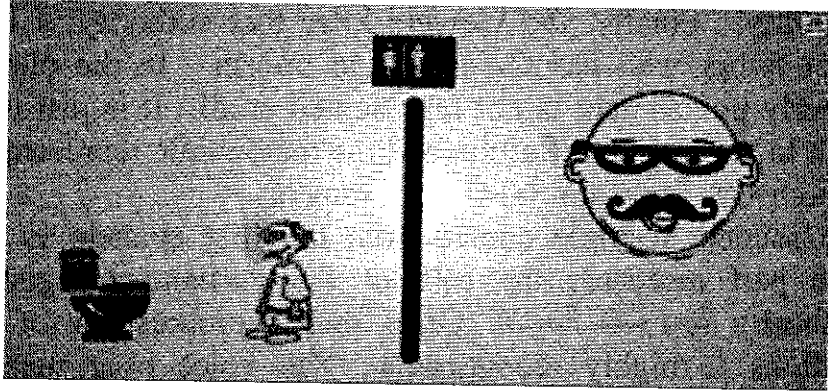
Screen Shot (2)

through the moustache representing machismo. This example presents metonymic identity compression. That is, naughty children are represented visually through

Fig. 1
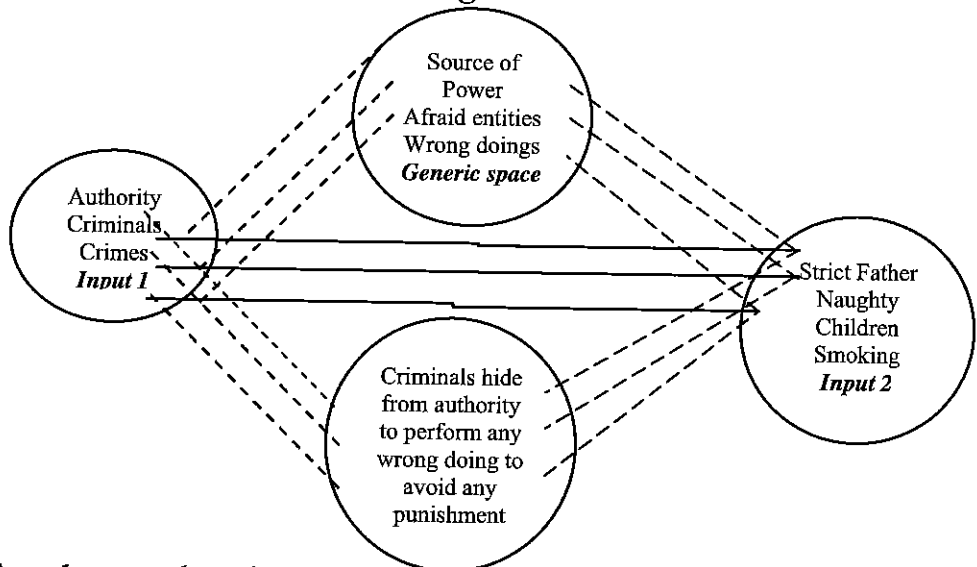
Another cultural stereotype, whereby all mistakes are compressed into one example- smoking at an early age, and of

course such an action usually takes place in the bathroom behind the back of the authoritative father. In this case completion arises from background knowledge and from the verbal clues of the voice over. Going back and forth between the spaces, both the verbal and the visual aspects facilitate selective projection to ultimately explain the concept of authority. Finally, the viewers infer that authority is like a strict father who has the power to punish. In the clip, the fatherly punishment is not represented at all. It is just linked back to the earlier definition and the metonymic representation of both القوة force and العقوبة punishment.

The second example comes from the first episode as well. This part discusses the role of the Parliament/Legislative Authority السلطة التشريعية. Once more compression of vital relations is highly recognizable. The voice over mentions several institutions as examples of legislative authority:

"...السلطة التشريعية زى مجلس الشعب فى مصر، مجلس النواب فى لبنان، الكونجرس فى أمريكا، البرلمان فى فرنسا أو معمر القذافى فى ليبيا"

'The legislative authority such as the People's Council in Egypt, the House of Representatives in Lebanon, the Congress in the states, the Parliament in France and Qaddafi in Libya' [My Translation].

Here, we can find several visual metonymic expressions which we comprehend through the compression of several vital relations at different levels. Information is packed brilliantly through the drawings where compression operates, so that viewers can make sense of the items presented in Screen Shot (3). Drawings of famous cultural symbols are used. A drawing of the People's Council building مجلس الشعب in Egypt, with its famous dome and the Egyptian flag on top, is represented as an example of legislative authority. However, buildings are not used in other countries since they are not considered common background knowledge. Instead, more familiar items such as drawings of famous touristic places are used to refer to for both of the United States and France, where we have the

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Statue of Liberty and Eifel Tower respectively. Similarly the Lebanese state

Screen Shot (3)

emblem-Cedar Tree- is used for Lebanon. Finally, Qaddafi is presented as a political figure representing dictatorship. The whole collection is compressed as representatives of parliaments at different places in the world. Although the discussion is about parliaments and their legislative role, the introduction of Qaddafi among them provides a humorous criticism of Libya's ruling system. Libya is supposed to be a republic; however, Qaddafi changed it into some kind of monarchy where all power is in his hand as shown in the accompanying voice over comment, " أو معمر القذافى فى ليبيا or... Qaddafi in Lybia". Thus, he is indirectly criticized as he substitutes the whole system elsewhere. His presentation in a small low priced auto vehicle that poor people use for transportation adds a humorous effect; it actually recalls back a broadcasted speech which he gave earlier in this vehicle, for which he was widely ridiculed.

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The following part in the clip deals with the role of السلطة التشريعية the legislative authority presented by the voice over as follows:

" ...و دورها رقابى تشريعى، بيراقب الحكومة ماليا و إداريا، سن القوانين...."

'Its role is both supervisory and legislative. It watches over / monitors the government expenditure and administrative performance, issues laws...'

In the drawing, several compressions occur. Firstly, parliaments presented earlier in different countries are compressed into the Egyptian People's Council drawing. Secondly, MPs are metonymically compressed into the place where they meet. Additionally, the building is visually personified by adding eyeglasses to the watchful
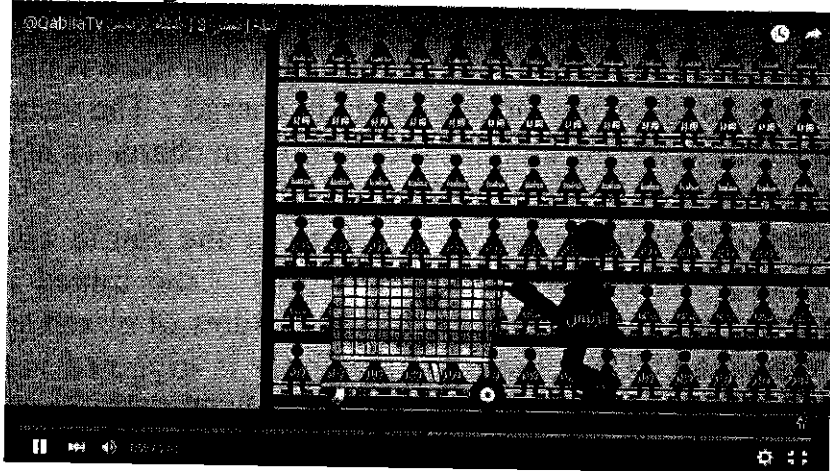

Screen Shot (4)

windows of the building into winking eyes (screen shot 4), to match the role stated by the voice over as بيراقب الحكومة 'watches over / monitors the government...'. The big 'nerdy' glasses draws on the stereotypical image of nerds who are always observant and smart, which corresponds once more to the role of monitoring the performance of the government.

In the third episode, النظام الرئاسى 'the presidential ruling system' is explained. Here, the words do not trigger the

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metaphor; it's the animation. The voice over describes the roles of the president in this system saying:
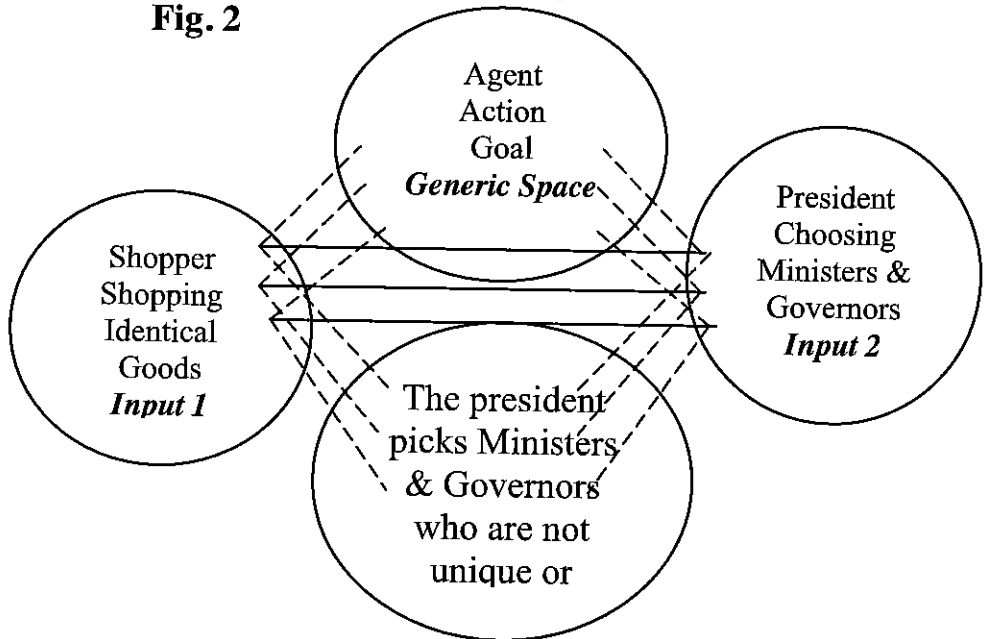
"....و كمان بيختار الوزراء والمحافظين بتوعه وزير وزير و محافظ محافظ...."

'...and [the president] chooses each and every one of his ministers and governors....'

Screen Shot (5)

The following animation is shown simultaneously on screen (screen shot 5), where the president is compared to a shopper picking items (ministers and governors) off the racks

Fig. 2

and into the cart. Thus, the analogy is visually introduced rather that verbally as shown in screenshot 5. The fact, that the president is represented as a shopper who is walking slowly in a relaxed mode, shows that the president is not exerting effort in choosing those who help him. In addition, the representation of the ministers and governors as identical mini male dolls on the shelves stresses the idea that there is no clear criterion for choosing those who are in charge. The visual blend adds to the meaning; it shows those in charge as helpless items controlled by the president.

A very interesting example is found in the fourth episode, describing نظام الحكم المختلط / البرلماسى the mixed ruling systems. At this point in the clip, the features of mixed system are discussed. Once more the metaphor is triggered verbally by the voiceover. Then, it is illustrated by the drawings. The section begins with the voice over saying:

"....و آخر نظام عندنا هو المزيج بين الصنفين، قصدى النظامين..."

'....the last system we have is the mixture between the two cuisines; I mean the two types....'

Simultaneously, a drawing of a burger bun with various mismatching components (fish, fried chicken, falafel, lettuce, cheddar cheese, tomatoes, coriander and lemon slices) stuffed into the bun is presented on the screen (screen shot 6) to prepare for the extended metaphor comparing the mixed ruling system to a sandwich.
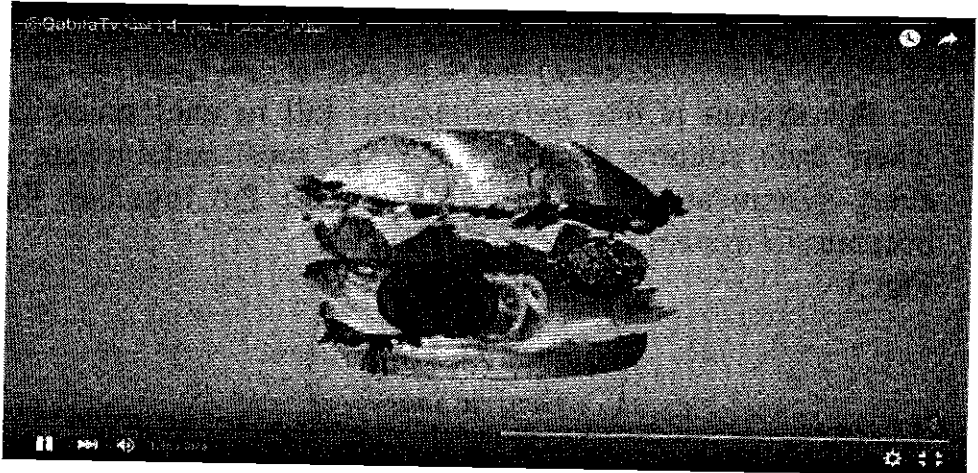
Screen Shot (6)

Moving onto screen shot (7), the metaphor is reinforced visually using simple diagrams
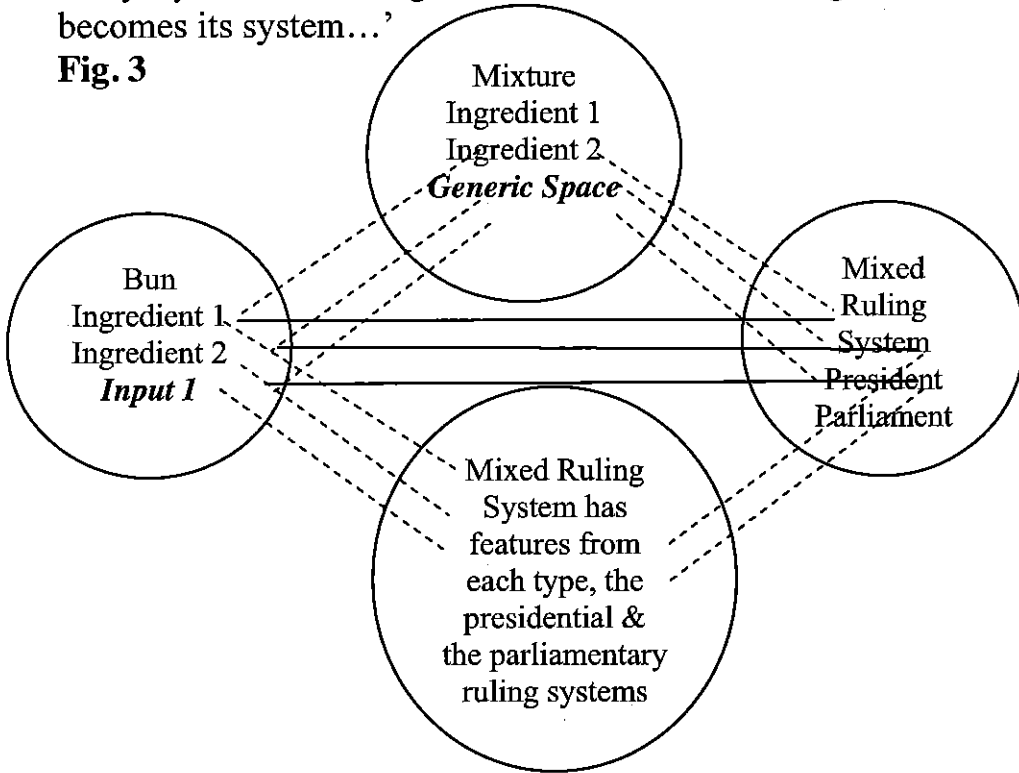

Screen Shot (7)

Parliaments everywhere are compressed through the representation of People's Council in Egypt. Similarly, all presidents are compressed and represented in the form of a simple diagram of a man. Put together in the same sandwich alludes to the mismatch referred to in screen shot 6.

After such a verbal and visual introduction of the idea, the voice over states the link clearly:

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"....و ده نظام عامل كده زى سندويتش الحبشتكانات يعنى كل دولة بتاخد أحسن ما فى كل نظام بالنسبة لظروفها ويبقى هو ده النظام بتاعها..."

'...this system is like *habashtakanat* [all in one] sandwich, where each country chooses the best / most suitableitem in every system according to its conditions. Put together, this becomes its system...'

Fig. 3

Mixture
Ingredient 1
Ingredient 2
Generic Space

Bun
Ingredient 1
Ingredient 2
Input 1

Mixed
Ruling
System
President
Parliament

Mixed Ruling
System has
features from
each type, the
presidential &
the parliamentary
ruling systems

The voice over proceeds to give an example of such a system:

"...و النظام ده أثبت نجاحه فى دول كتير زى البرازيل مثلا...."

'...and this system has been successful in many countries such as Brazil.'

Brazil is represented visually, in screen shot (8), through the drawing of the World Cup in the colours of the National Football Team of Brazil. Once more, the most famous thing

Screen Shot (8)

is used to represent the country, rather than the flag which is less known to the Egyptian laymen. Similarly, the success of the system is concretized through the trigger of the country's excellence in football. The sound effect of cheering crowds with the drawing referrs to Brazil's sportive achievement as well as the success of the mixed ruling system Brazil adopts. Drawing on the food metaphor, the following part of the clip (screen shot 9) criticizes Mubarak's rule in a very creative way. Three elements are at work in this part, creating a multiple blend: the image, the written recipe and the voice over describing the conditions during Mubarak's rule. These are the words of the voice over accompanying the drawings and animation:

"...أيام مبارك بقى كان النظام سندويتشات برضه، بس للاسف سندويتشات منقية أسوأ ما فى الأصناف كلها، يعنى الرئيس كان ليه سلطات بس مفيش برلمان حقيقى يقف ادامه، و الوزراء اللى بينفذوا قراراته كان ممكن بجرة قلم يبقواأعضاء فى البرلمان اللى بيشرعوا القوانين، و الرئيس كان بإيده يحل مجلس الشعب و الحكومة وقت ما يحب وما حدش فى إيده انه يحله، و الشعب كان بيروح ينتخب الرئيس و البرلمان و هو عارف ان النتيجة محسومة من قبل كده لأن الوشوش مش بتتغير، و لو حد قدم طعن فى الانتخابات و خد حكم من المحكمة، فتحى سرور يقول لك، أصل المجلس سيد قراره..."
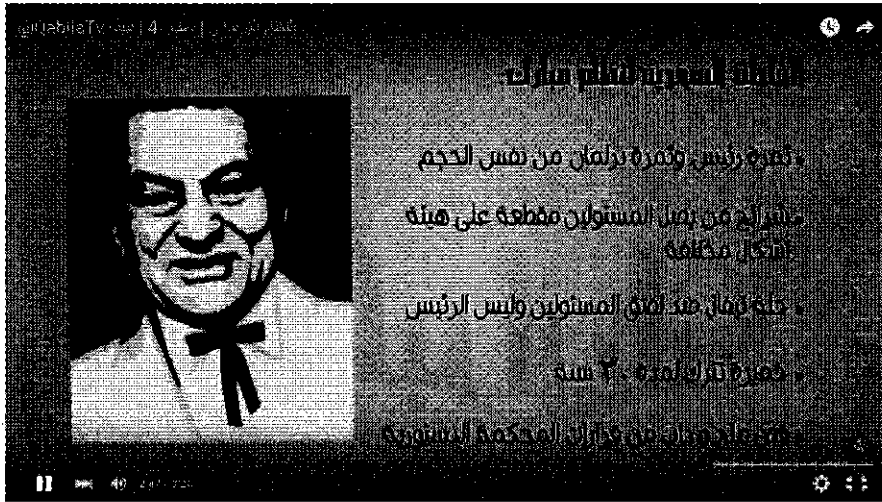
Screen Shot (9)

'….during Mubarak's rule the system was sandwiches as well, but unfortunately sandwiches with the worst components selected of all systems. The president had power but the parliament was weak and could not confront him. The ministers who were supposed to execute his decisions could at any time, by presidential decrees, become MPs who issue laws and legislations. The president had the power to dissolve the cabinet and the parliament anytime and no one had the right to oust him. The people used to vote in presidential and parliamentary elections though results were known beforehand because the faces were the same all along, and if the court accepted any appeal, Fatehi Sorour would say the Council has supreme power.'

The image is another interesting visual metaphor, where we have the face of Mubarak instead of Colonel Sanders in the Kentucky Fried Chicken logo. Once more relating Mubarak's ruling system to a special-unfortunately bad- recipe. On the right side of the screen we find the written recipe الخلطة السرية لنظام مبارك'The Secret Recipe for Mubarak's Ruling System'. Each item corresponds to one of the features explained verbally. Each ingredient transforms what is said into food

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related item to match the overall metaphor of 'mixed system is like food'.

Fig. 4
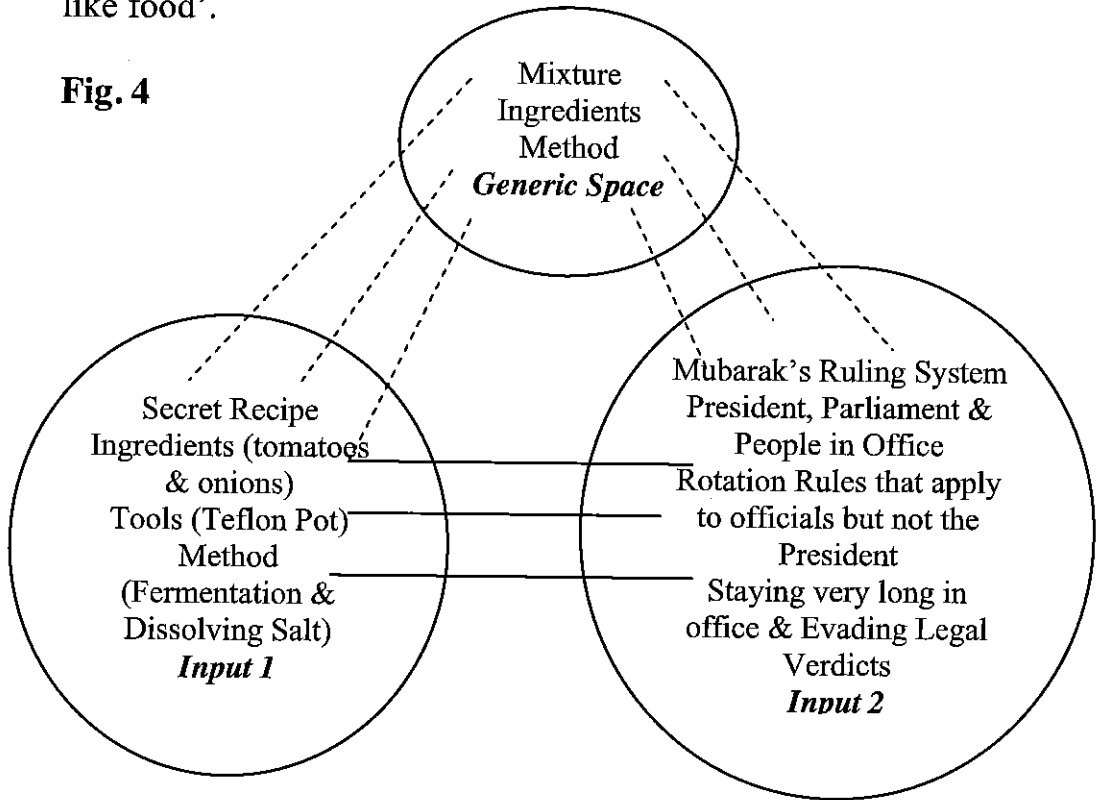
The first refers to the supposedly existing balance between the president's power and the parliament's authority where we have:

"ثمرة رئيس و ثمرة برلمان من نفس الحجم"

'One president fruit and one parliament fruit of the same size.'

The second item makes fun of the ministers who are like puppets, they are sliced and cut by the president in different shapes and sizes as he likes:

"شرائح من بصل المسئولين مقطعة على هيئة أشكال مختلفة"

'Chopped minister onion rings of several shapes'.

Thirdly, we have:

"حلة تيفال ضد لصق الرئيس و ليس المسئولين"

'Anti-sticking Teflon pots for those in charge but not for the president.' Here, the producers are criticizing Mubarak's rule by comparing Mubarak to food that sticks in the pot [in office], which implies dictatorship.
The fourth tip:

"خميرة تتيرك لمدة 30 سنة"

'Leave the dough to rise for 30 years'
is shown simultaneously on screen with the verbal explanation of the elections during Mubarak's rule. The imbalance between authorities and elections' results that are known beforehand brought about in Mubarak's 30-year rule. Again, dictatorship is implied.
The last item is shown on screen simultaneously with the speech about Fatehi Sorour who didn't abide by the Constitution Court ruling concerning any election problem. Once more food is referred to:

"فص ملح و داب من قرارات المحكمة الدستورية"

'Dissolve and disappear just like salt from Constitutional Court verdicts'
An idiomatic expression here is used to describe Sorour's attitude and reaction towards the law, where we have و ملح فص داب *dissolve and disappear just like salt* which is always used to describe evasive people who totally disappear as a granule of salt would in food. Thus, the parliament evades and ignores court rulings like dissolving salt, which again implies dictatorship.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown how compression of several vital relations accounts for the production and interpretation of different visual elements. Both verbal and visual aspects are intertwined to simplify political concepts. Culturally salient visual aspects such as stereotypes are employed in the clips to pack a great amount of information. The chosen clips

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exemplify some outstanding features of blending, where recognizable visual compressions of abstract values are frequently employed. Different tropes such as metonymies and personifications are represented visually to facilitate the comprehension of different political terms as well as to criticize political conditions in Egypt and the Arab world. The clips make use of several strategies. Sometimes the metaphor is represented both visually and verbally; other times visually only. There are also some instances where the spoken words, are transformed into written ones on the screen besides the images and diagrams concretizing the used metaphors to simplify political terms.

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