

A note on the generic space: Do we really need it?

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Based on the analysis of images, concepts and linguistic expressions appearing on selected news magazines covers, the paper examines the notion of *generic space*, one of the constitutive elements of the basic integration network model that 'maps onto each of the inputs and contains what the inputs have in common' (Fauconnier and Turner 2002:41). Held to be indispensable for the blending process to take place, the generic space has nonetheless been rather poorly defined by the proponents of the theory (cf. Pérez Hernández 2002, Ritchie 2004, Libura 2010). In fact, the generic space, which is claimed to contain commonalities across different inputs, seems to cause ambiguity rather than account for the selection of appropriate elements from the inputs to be projected onto the blended space.

Following Brandt and Brandt (2005), we shall claim that, in order to avoid the profusion of conceivable meanings, the formation of input spaces and blend integration should not be determined by the attributes of the generic space alone, but cued by the context and goal of the communicative situation itself. We thus propose to adopt the relevance-driven model of conceptual blending as postulated by Brandt and Brandt (2005) combined with Langacker's (2008) theory of *Current Discourse Space*. In our view, the revised CBT freed now from the generic space, but drawing on both models, which emphasize the role of discourse in its different facets, including *inter alia* speaker-hearer interaction, communicative relevance and situational context, can offer a more accurate account of the cognitive processing taking place during conceptual integration.

References

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