

FORGING REALMS: A CONCEPTUAL BLENDING ANALYSIS OF NEOLOGISMS IN GEORGE R. R. MARTIN'S A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the formation and cognitive impact of neologisms in George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire series, employing Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) as a framework. Neologisms, or newly coined words, play a pivotal role in fantasy literature by enriching worldbuilding, cultural identity, and narrative depth. The research focuses on two primary volumes, A Game of Thrones and A Clash of Kings, analysing the linguistic strategies Martin uses to create these terms, such as blending, compounding, borrowing, derivation, and semantic shift and their contribution to the immersive quality of the fictional world. Through CBT, the study examines how readers mentally integrate real-world knowledge with fantastical elements to construct emergent meanings for neologisms like "Kingsguard," "dragonglass," and "Warg." The analysis reveals that Martin's neologisms are not arbitrary but are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts, facilitating intuitive comprehension and engagement. Key findings highlight how these terms evolve narratively, expanding in significance and thematic resonance as the story progresses. Additionally, the research underscores the intertextual and cultural associations embedded in Martin's lexicon, which anchor the fantastical world in familiar historical and mythological frameworks. By bridging cognitive linguistics and literary analysis, this study demonstrates how neologisms function as both linguistic innovations and narrative tools, enhancing reader immersion and reinforcing the coherence of Martin's fictional universe. The insights gained contribute to broader discussions on the role of language in fantasy literature and the cognitive processes underlying reader interpretation.

Keywords: Neologisms, Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), World-building, Cognitive Linguistics, Fantasy Literature

1. Introduction

A Song of Ice and Fire is an American series of high fantasy novels by George R. R. Martin. Martin started writing the first book, *A Game of Thrones*, in 1991, and released it in 1996. He initially thought of the series as a trilogy and has published five out of seven volumes that he had planned. The latest in the series, *A Dance with Dragons*, came out in 2011. Martin is currently writing the sixth book, called *The Winds of Winter*. There is a planned seventh book, *A Dream of Spring*. *A Song of Ice and Fire* describes a brutal world ruled by political realism. Little supernatural power, if any, exists and only on the periphery of the known world. Moral uncertainty dominates the books, and numerous plotlines repeatedly question issues of loyalty, pride, human sexuality, piety, and the ethical use of violence. The action is revealed through an alternating sequence of subjective perspectives, the success or survival of any of which is never guaranteed. Each book is narrated in a limited third-person, based on a pool of characters that grows from nine characters in the initial book to 31 by the fifth.

The books are staged on the imaginary continents of Westeros and Essos (the whole world does not have a name attributed to it). Martin's claimed inspirations for the series are the Wars of the Roses and *The Accursed Kings*, a series of Maurice Druon's French historical novels. The series overall is composed of three intertwined plot threads: a dynastic conflict between multiple houses for the Westeros throne, the desire of the remaining members of the exiled Targaryen

ruling dynasty to journey back from Essos and retake the Iron Throne, and the increasing menace of the very powerful supernatural Others from the most northerly part of Westeros.

As of 2015, over 90 million copies in 47 languages were sold. The fourth and fifth books topped the New York Times Best Seller lists upon publication in 2005 and 2011, respectively. Among the numerous derivative works are several prequel novellas, two TV series, a comic book continuation, and numerous card, board, and video games. The series has been universally praised for its world-building, characters, and storytelling.

Language, in fantasy fiction, is a powerful tool for world-building, cultural richness, and immersion. Special languages, dialects, and nomenclatures such as Tolkien's Elvish or Martin's Dothraki add credibility to worlds, making them resonate with depth and presence. Patterns of speech and idioms define separate races and societies, underlining cultural identities, whether in the formal beauty of elves or the blunt, practical argot of dwarves. Magic systems in fantasy frequently depend on linguistic tropes, be they true names or arcane incantations in which words in themselves hold power. Beyond surface aesthetics, language can represent ideas such as mastery (through taboo languages) or knowledge (through ancient scripts), influencing plot and atmosphere. At its best, the deliberate use of language in fantasy enhances believability and creates a sense of wonder that underpins the genre (Chatterji, 2003).

A neologism is a recently coined word, phrase, or expression that arises to define new concepts, technologies, or cultural realities. Coined words may result from linguistic innovation, scientific discovery, or social evolution, and whereas some disappear, others become an integral part of language (e.g., "Google," "cyberspace"). In literature, neologisms are powerful means by which writers can create distinctive voices, create immersive worlds, and mirror thematic preoccupations. Whether in playful nonsense (such as Lewis Carroll's "chortle") or dystopian slang (such as Orwell's "doublethink"), they stretch the limits of language and thought (Bednarska, 2015).

The usefulness of neologisms in literary works is that they can enrich world-building, characterisation, and thematic depth. In speculative fiction, made-up words such as "muggle" (Rowling) or "thneed" (Seuss, 1957) establish unique cultural and social contexts, whereas in experimental fiction (such as Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*), they subvert traditional meaning. Neologisms may also serve as satire or criticism, revealing changes in society. Atwood's "Unwoman" or Burgess's "Ultraviolence" boil complicated concepts into suggestive abbreviations. By playing with words, authors not only add to realism but also challenge readers to read texts on a more creative and cerebral level.

1.1 Rationale of the study

Although there has been a great deal of discussion regarding the world-building and language of George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, there has been less focus on the cognitive processes behind the formation of its neologisms. Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), a cognitive linguistic theory, provides useful insights into how new words are created through the blending of real-world concepts with the fictional elements of an imaginary universe. Through the use of CBT, this research seeks to bridge this gap and investigate the linguistic mechanisms behind Martin's neologisms.

1.2 Research objectives

This study aims to explore how George R. R. Martin uses neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire* to construct his fictional world, develop cultural identity, and enhance narrative depth.

1. To analyse how conceptual blending functions, shapes, and influences the formation and interpretation of neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*.
2. To examine the linguistic strategies George R. R. Martin employs in coining new terms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, and to explore how these strategies contribute to the narrative structure and cultural depth of the fictional world.

1.3 Research questions

1. How does conceptual blending contribute to the creation and cognitive impact of neologisms in George R. R. Martin's fictional world?
2. What linguistic strategies does Martin employ in coining new terms, and how do these contribute to narrative and cultural depth?

1.4 Significance of the study

This research will add to the existing literature on cognitive linguistics and fantasy fiction by using Conceptual Blending Theory to examine neologisms. Through an examination of how language constructs and represents the world and culture of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, this research will further our knowledge of how new words enhance the immersive nature of fantasy fiction and the cognitive processes involved in their creation.

2. Literature review

Using invented words, or neologisms, is a major literary tool in fantasy fiction. Such coined words enable writers to build distinctive worlds, cultures, and belief systems that go beyond the limits of language in the real world. By creating new vocabularies, fantasy authors place readers in unrecognisable but internally consistent worlds, rendering language an effective instrument for storytelling and world-building.

2.1 Neologisms in Literature and Fantasy

One of fantasy fiction's most powerful neologism creators is J.R.R. Tolkien, whose philological background influenced the elaborate linguistic systems he created for *The Lord of the Rings* and associated works. Tolkien did not just invent words; he built whole languages like Quenya and Sindarin, including grammar and etymology. Words such as hobbit, Mordor, Nazgûl, and Eärendil are not arbitrary creations but are rooted in a linguistic and cultural context, so his fictional world is old and real. Scholars such as Shippey (2005) contend that Tolkien's creation of language was crucial to the realism of Middle-earth and indivisible from its mythology.

J.K. Rowling, on the other hand, takes a more popular and playful approach to neologism in the *Harry Potter* series. She borrows from Latin, French, and English etymology to coin names such as Muggle, Azkaban, Dementor, and Quidditch. These names are made to be mystical or enigmatic sounding, but they do not have a difficult pronunciation and can easily be recalled by children. Linguist Crystal (2003) observes that Rowling's neologisms are not merely creative but also useful since they mirror social hierarchies, magical principles, and institutional frameworks in the world she has created.

Čačija & Marković (2018) article on the translation of genre literature: fantasy, science fiction, children's and young adult literature, and the problems linked to the translation of the genres. The typical features of every genre are explained, as are the significant problems encountered while translating the aforementioned genres. The central theme of the study is the translation of neologisms and proper nouns, analysed in the case of *His Dark Materials*, a children's science fantasy trilogy written by Pullman (1995). Several procedures for translating neologisms and proper nouns are outlined, and it is upon those that an analysis of *His Dark Materials'* Croatian translation has been conducted. The results of the analysis led us to the following conclusions: There is no preference in strategy choice in translating neologisms, whereas copying is employed as the most frequently used strategy in translating proper nouns into Croatian.

Another study was published by Marković (2018) that addresses the translation of genre fiction: fantasy, science fiction, and children's fiction, and the problems related to the translation of these genres. As far as translation theory is concerned, domestication and foreignization of translation are discussed. The most important features of each studied genre are given, as well as the main problems encountered when translating these genres. The central topic addressed in the study is the translation of neologisms and proper nouns, examined in the example of *His Dark Materials*, a children's science fantasy trilogy by Pullman. Different

procedures applied for translating neologisms and proper nouns are given, based on which the Croatian translation of *His Dark Materials* was analysed. The conclusions drawn based on the analysis results are that there is no preference in strategy choice for translation of neologisms, as all strategies occurring in the given work are utilised in equal proportions, whereas copying or reproduction is the most frequent strategy for translation of proper names into Croatian. To arrive at a broader conclusion about translating neologisms and proper names into Croatian, additional research would be needed on the topic

A study was conducted by Vasylenko and Vozniuk (2024) on the linguistic features of the “author’s neologisms in J. K. Rowling’s novel “*Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*” in which they explain the neologisms of J. Rowling that are addressed in the article. She is well-known for creating the *Harry Potter* series, and she is also famous for her wordplay, which includes making new words and phrases. All these neologisms provide depth and richness to the world of wizards she has created. There are a number of ways to form author’s neologisms, of which syntactic (word-forming derivation), semantic (shifts in the sense of a word, its reinterpretation) and borrowing dominate. It is disclosed that J. Rowling coined neologisms with word-forming derivation (suffixing, word formation and abbreviation and semantic derivation, but in the first two books, there are no neologisms coined by the morphological type of stem formation. The primary functions served by the neologisms in the novel are originality, creativity and expressiveness. The neologisms have become permanent fixtures of the *Harry Potter* world and have helped extend the popularity of the series. They evidence Rowling’s creativity as an author and her power to make her fictional world come to life with language.

2.2 Conceptual blending theory (CBT) in literature

A book published by Booth (2017) on Shakespeare and Conceptual Blending, this book demonstrates the way Shakespeare’s greatness as a raconteur, wit and poet mirrors the innovative process of conceptual blending. Cognitive theory offers rich new ideas lighting up Shakespeare. In contrast, he lights them up, and the theory of blending, or conceptual integration, remarkably supports and enriches traditional and contemporary assumptions of literary critique. This research investigates how Shakespeare constructed his plots through the synthesis of varied elements of story and the condensation of events in order to build dramatic illusion; examines Shakespeare’s wit as encompassing abrupt incongruities and a balance between contrasting viewpoints; questions how synthesis creates the “strange meaning” characteristic of poetic speech; and locates the work within other cognitive literary criticism. This book is most relevant to those studying Shakespeare and cognitive theory as well as readers interested in knowing how the mind functions.

This research by Oakley (1998) ventures into the use of Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) in an attempt to realise complex referential relationships in narrative discourse, the manner in which humans utilise language for identity construction, and how narrative structure directs the reader through textual artefacts.

Oakley applies CBT to an extract from Art Spiegelman’s *Maus II: Survivor’s Tale*, presenting it as a case study. He explains how conceptual blending, a cognitive instrument derived from Fauconnier’s theory of mental space, is employed in order to establish meaning and provide understanding in discourse. Conceptual blending is employed by combining a number of different mental spaces each containing differing concepts or fragments of information into a fresh, blended space that produces complex, rich meaning.

The research discusses several uses of conceptual blending, such as:

- Event integration (blending events from other contexts);
- conceptual change (changing perspectives or concepts)

- Metaphor projection (generating metaphors)
- Humour, literary invention, and emotional and attitudinal transfers.

Oakley contends that conceptual blending is a powerful cognitive mechanism for describing how readers interpret and construct meaning in narrative discourse, particularly in texts with complex narration or multilayered narratives such as *Maus II*. He shows that readers create meaning through blending information from multiple input spaces, which provides for a rich, multidimensional understanding of the narrative.

Beidokhti and Farhood (2023) examine how cognitive linguistics and mental spaces contribute to the interpretation of literary narratives. It focuses on how conceptualizers (readers) create mental representations or "mental spaces" to understand complex ideas in language. The study specifically analyses two literary narratives: a tragic passage from the *Shahnameh* (Kave-e-Ahangar story) and a comic fable from *Resale-e-Delgosha*. Using space builders as clues, the research identifies both micro-level and macro-level mental spaces in these narratives.

The analysis reveals that narratives often merge two types of conceptual blends: emotive and non-emotive blends. One of these blends tends to dominate, depending on the genre of the narrative. For instance, tragic narratives tend to favour emotive blends, while comic narratives lean toward non-emotive blends.

A paper was published that discusses the problem of genre hybridisation and mixture in genre theory, based on cognitive science and cognitive linguistics. Although genres have been addressed as cognitive schemas, existing models have not yet captured the complexity outlined by critics. In particular, prior treatments have been missing an understanding of how these schemas are modified, rearranged, and combined. The paper discusses Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), introduced by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, which offers a model of how cognitive schemas may be blended and restructured. Basing its roots in linguistics, psychology, literary hermeneutics, and brain science, CBT has been applied to the analysis of thought and meaning in mundane and extremely creative situations across the sciences, arts, and everyday life. The essay applies James Joyce's *Ulysses*, specifically the "Circe" episode, to illustrate how genre blending takes place. The application of CBT illustrates how the surface-level details and structural elements of the text can be accounted for through conceptual blending's processes and principles to reveal the intricacies of genre mixture (Sinding, 2005).

In summary, neologisms are an invaluable literary device in fantasy fiction that allows writers to craft interactive worlds and increase the depth of their work. Writers construct distinctive cultures, frameworks, and identities within their narratives through the creation of new words. Conceptual Blending Theory offers a model for analysing the way readers comprehend and interpret new linguistic forms by combining several elements in constructing rich, complex meanings. This theory makes sense of how language plays a role in world-building and reader engagement, further establishing the relationship between text and audience.

3. Methodology

The present research employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytic research design, which is adequate for investigating language use in literary works. Unlike a numerical data focus, this methodology prioritises intensive interpretation and contextual comprehension of linguistic phenomena. The research is founded on cognitive linguistics, that is, Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) put forward by (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002). CBT offers a cognitive theory of how human beings blend concepts from various mental domains (or "input spaces") to create new, blended concepts.

Through this theory, the study explores how George R. R. Martin invents and weaves coined words (neologisms) into *A Song of Ice and Fire*. These coined words are not arbitrary; they

mirror profound cognitive and cultural processes that contribute to constructing the fictional world. The design seeks to investigate not just the form of these neologisms but also how they work cognitively, how readers process them, and how they enrich the imaginative life of the narrative. This makes CBT an effective tool for examining both the form and function of Martin's verbal creativity.

3.1 Data collection

This research uses purposive sampling to pull out appropriate data, particularly targeting neologisms utilised in two major volumes of *A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings*. These two volumes were intentionally targeted because of their role in establishing the world of the narrative and their high density of invented words. As the initial books of the series, they present readers with the key houses, locations, mythologies, and political systems of Martin's world, making them well-suited to a concentrated linguistic and cognitive examination.

The chosen neologisms will cover a wide variety of newly created lexical words, ranging from place names and titles and social roles to objects and artefacts and creatures and species. These words will be analysed both for their linguistic forms, such as morphological composition, blending, and derivation and for their cognitive and narrative purposes. The emphasis will be placed on how these neologisms serve to enhance the world-building immersion in the series and how they function within conceptual blends that combine real-world notions with fantasy. These neologisms will be analysed not only for their grammatical formation (e.g., compounding, derivation, borrowing), but also for their narrative purpose and cognitive effect, especially how they combine familiar and exotic components to engender immersive concepts through the prism of Conceptual Blending Theory.

3.2 Analytical Framework

The research utilises a two-pronged approach to examine the chosen neologisms: looking at both their linguistic composition and their interpretation using Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT). To begin with, the linguistic composition of each neologism will be scrutinised to establish how it is constructed. This includes the classification of the word formation process into several types, including blending (combining two present words), compounding (uniting several complete words), borrowing (borrowing from actual life languages or roots), semantic shift (altering or expanding the meaning of an already present word), and invention (completely new formations with no linguistic origin). This breakdown explains the technical process of how the terms are formed.

Second, conceptual blending analysis, following Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) framework, will be employed to analyse the cognitive processes underlying such neologisms. Each of the neologisms will be examined concerning:

Input spaces: the worldly and fictional knowledge spaces that feed into the concept.

Generic space: the common pattern or form that connects the inputs.

Blended space: the new mental space created by combining elements of both inputs to produce a novel, meaningful concept.

From this perspective, the analysis will examine how readers mentally process these invented terms by unconsciously blending known real-world elements with fictional imaginative contexts. The aim is to discover how these blends create emergent meaning, improve narrative comprehension, and contribute to the immersive nature of Martin's fictional world.

3.3 Limitations

This research is confined to two novels of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, which might not be representative of the extent of Martin's neologisms or stylistic development throughout the whole saga. Furthermore, since Conceptual Blending Theory is a cognitive interpretation, some analyses might be subject to the reader's point of view and context. Therefore, although CBT

provides an influential framework through which meaning creation can be analysed, it is not an objective outcome. More studies on other volumes or comparative studies with other fantasy writers may extend the findings.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this research is done via a twofold approach, integrating linguistic analysis of neologisms with a cognitive interpretation drawn from Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT). Initially, every chosen neologism in *A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings* is classified based on its linguistic structure, whether blending, compounding, borrowing, semantic shift, or invention. This classification emphasises the author's morphological creativity. Second, the neologisms are explored through the methodology of CBT, with the focus on the ways input spaces (fictional and real), generic structures, and blended spaces contribute to the creation of emergent meaning. This dual analysis seeks to explain how neologisms not just enrich the world of fiction but also involve the reader's thinking abilities to create immersive, sensemaking experiences.

4.1 Linguistic Categorisation of Neologisms

This section of the analysis is concerned with the structural and morphological composition of the neologisms in *A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings*. Every coined term is analyzed to understand the process used to create it, e.g., blending (combining part of one existing word with another), compounding (combining two or more complete words), borrowing (incorporating linguistic roots from existing real-world expressions), semantic shift (giving new meanings to already existing words), or invention (developing completely new expressions without linguistic precursor). By recognizing these processes, the research identifies how George R. R. Martin uses linguistic creativity to build a realistic and engaging fantasy world. This categorisation further provides the foundation for a more in-depth cognitive analysis in the next section.

4.2 Blending Neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

Blending, or the combination of two existing words or roots to produce a new word, is often employed to make immersive and impactful neologisms in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The blends not only help populate the fictional world with distinctive vocabulary but also subtly evoke their cultural or symbolic connotations. For example, "*dragonglass*" combines dragon and glass, a volcanic material used against White Walkers, and hence both origin (dragon) and appearance (glass). Likewise, "*warg*," while not an obvious combination to all readers, resonates with Old Norse origins and is commonly thought to be a combination of werewolf and magical seer, a human who can spiritually enter into animals. Another is "*ironborn*," which splices together iron and born, and refers to a seafaring folk forged by a harsh metallic environment and culture. Such blending neologisms are not so much linguistic innovation but contain embedded cultural, magical, and thematic meaning that helps to support the richness of Martin's world-building (Martin, 1996; Martin, 1999).

4.3 Compounding Neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

George R. R. Martin uses compounding, or the process of combining two complete words to produce a new word, to write a range of neologisms that enrich the world-building in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Compounding enables Martin to produce evocative terms that sound authentic to his imaginary world but are understandable to readers. For instance, "*Kingsguard*" is a combination of king and guard, meaning an elite group of knights who are sworn to defend the king of the Seven Kingdoms. Likewise, "*Stormlands*," created by combining storm and lands, is a place famous for its severe, stormy weather, emphasising both the natural and cultural features of the location. The second compound word, "*Night's Watch*," is a combination of night and watch, referring to the brotherhood that guards the Wall, which is a division between the world that is known and the horrors beyond. Through compounding, Martin creates terms that

are not only practical but also bear huge narrative importance, capturing cultural, geographical, and social implications of his world (Martin, 1996; Martin, 1999).

4.4 Borrowing Neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, borrowing is a central process of word formation that is used to coin neologisms contributing to the enrichment and authenticity of the world-building. Borrowing entails the application of words that are borrowed from other languages or cultures and applying them in the fictional setting. George R. R. Martin commonly references Old Norse, Latin, and other ancient languages, and medieval European society, to help provide names, titles, and vocabulary that are reminiscent of real historical language. For instance, the name "*Mormont*," which is the name of a titled house, is a reference to the Old French "*marmont*," which means a bear. In the same way, "*Valyrian*," the title of an ancient language and culture, brings the Latin-sounding origins to invoke a sense of old power and mystique for the language. Borrowed words such as these are not just exotic names but add depth to the story, placing Martin's world in a larger historical and cultural framework, which makes the reader's experience more immersive (Martin, 1996, 1998).

4.5 Derivation of Neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

In *A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings*, George R. R. Martin uses derivation with great success to invent neologisms that add richness to the linguistic texture of his imagined world. Derivation is the process of forming new words by the addition of affixes (prefixes or suffixes) onto a basic root, enabling meaning and function to be extended. Martin often uses this process to construct words that sound natural in the historical and cultural context of his story. As an example, the suffix "-ling" is employed in words like "wildling," a derivative of "*wild*," to describe individuals living outside the Wall, highlighting their wild nature in contrast to Westerosi. Likewise, "*sellsword*" fuses the verb "*sell*" and "*sword*" with a reflection of a soldier-for-hire, and "*greenseer*" takes the root "*see*" and attaches to it the prefix "green" as the mark of prophetic vision rooted in nature. Such derivational compositions mirror linguistic creativity as well as cognitive parsimony so that readers can determine meaning instinctively yet still keep within the framework of invented lexicon (Martin, 1996; Martin, 1998).

4.6 Semantic Shift Neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

In *A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings*, George R. R. Martin uses semantic shift as a word-formation process to assign novel, context-based meanings to known words in his imaginary world. Semantic shift involves using existing words and modifying or expanding their meaning to fit new narrative or conceptual functions. For instance, the term "hand," which is more often used to mean a body part, gets redefined in the title "*Hand of the King*" to signify a political office of utmost advisory authority, next only to the monarch. In a like manner, "*crow*," generally a bird, gets used as a slang term employed by the Free Folk to describe members of the Night's Watch, owing to their black garb and outsider status. This method enables Martin to reuse actual-world vocabulary in a manner that is both new and familiar, enhancing immersion by incorporating cultural connotation and world-specific meaning into common language (Martin, 1996; Martin, 1998).

4.7 Cognitive Interpretation of Neologisms through Conceptual Blending Theory

In this section, the process is analyzed by which chosen neologisms from *A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings* operate through the process of Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). According to CBT, meaning results when parts from two or more mental input spaces are mapped to a blended space, generating emergent meanings which are not an immediate result of any single input. In Martin's fictional world, neologisms tend to be created by the blending of real-world ideas (historical, cultural, or linguistic) and fantasy elements particular to Westeros and Essos.

4.8 Composition: Building the Conceptual Blending *A Song of Ice and Fire*

Conceptual mental spaces, which Fauconnier and Turner (2002) introduced, are temporary, dynamic mental structures used by people to manage meaning at the moment. The mental spaces provide readers with a means to comprehend unfamiliar concepts and terms by merging components from existing (real world) spaces and imaginary or fictional spaces. Within *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R. R. Martin artfully builds a fictional world which necessitates continuous cognitive blending by the readers to comprehend the novel's lexicon and worldbuilding.

The study begins with two essential input spaces:

Input Space 1 (Real-World Knowledge): Real historical references, medieval European sociopolitical organisations, religious bodies, warfare strategy, and ancient mythology.

Input Space 2 (Fictional Westeros and Essos World): Comprises fictional creatures, institutions, languages, geography, and cultural practices specific to Martin's world.

The Generic Space ensnares common structures or patterns across the two input spaces like hierarchy, authority, weaponry, or ritual which enable partial matching. The Blended Space resulting from this synthesis takes elements from each input and creates novel yet understandable concepts that are culturally and cognitively plausible.

"*Kingsguard*" combines the actual-world notion of royal bodyguards or medieval knights with the elite, sworn defenders of the king in Westeros. Although based on historical precedent, the Kingsguard achieves its own narrative purpose, ethos, and symbolic status within the narrative, becoming greater than a protective unit it represents fidelity, sacrifice, and moral dilemma.

"*Dragonglass*" is another evocative combination. It combines the properties of known volcanic glass (obsidian) with assumed magical attributes. Obsidian has been used as a tool and weapon throughout history in our world. In Martin's world, this material takes on new intellectual significance. It is now one of the few known weapons that can kill White Walkers. The combination creates a strong mental picture: ancient material + magic = weapon of an ancient enemy.

"*Weirwood trees*" merge the actual-world notion of holy trees (frequently found in pagan or indigenous faiths) with the distinctive cultural role of the Old Gods in Westeros. The trees, with red leaves and white bark faces that are carved into them, act as both spiritual landmarks and unspoken historians of history. The blending of the concepts enables them to function as both natural and divine symbols in the religious structure of the story.

"*Maester*" borrows the image of medieval scholars, monks, or physicians learned men with access to manuscripts and medical texts. The fictional character, however, adds messenger services (via ravens), political advisory functions, and a hierarchical, pseudo-scientific organisation of knowledge passing. The mix produces a new archetype that echoes in actual figures but which only exists in Martin's fictional order.

4.9 Blended Space and Emergent Meaning

In Conceptual Blending Theory, the blended space is a unique mental structure where parts of two or more input spaces are integrated to create a novel, emergent idea. This emergent meaning cannot be traced directly back to either input by itself but occurs as a result of their interaction. In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R. R. Martin uses this mental mechanism very successfully to create terms that are not only lexically new but also densely packed with narrative meaning.

For instance, "*White Walkers*" merges the input space for classic undead creatures (zombies or wraiths) and that of an intelligent, super-ancient race with magical abilities and culture. The blending of these resultant concepts transcends a simple monster trope. This creates fear and mythic potential and signifies an existential risk imbued in mystery and centuries-old tradition.

This emergent sense of meaning invites readers into a more profound story where the White Walkers are not merely foes but emblems of lost history and cyclical disaster.

Likewise, the term "Warg" combines the output of animal behaviour and human consciousness. Whereas most fantasy fiction plays with the concept of animal friendship, Martin's combination brings forth a novel phenomenon in which people usually from certain bloodlines can transfer their consciousness into animals and see the world from another species. The resulting notion of a "Warg" brings forth sophisticated themes like identity, control, and fusion of human and non-human experience, which are central to characters such as Bran Stark.

These fusions are not coincidental; they are designed to produce certain emotional and cultural reactions. Names such as "*White Walker*" and "*Warg*" have a resonance that fits the brutal, mythic environment of Westeros, and the mental work of figuring them out leads to a greater investment in the text. By creating such blended spaces, Martin not only increases narrative immersion but also constructs a fictional world that seems internally coherent and mentally plausible.

4.10 Completion: Function of Neologisms

Neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire* fulfill pivotal narrative purposes extending beyond their lexical innovation, actively involved in the unfolding of plots, thematic examination, and development of characters. Such newly invented words are well-integrated into the sociopolitical texture of Westeros, contributing to the fictional world's realism as well as simultaneously shaping its narrative construction. For example, the word "*bastard*" in the Westerosi context is not simply a genealogical term; it has deep social stigma, legal connotations, and emotional significance. It determines one's position in the social hierarchy, restricts access to power, and affects personal identity concerns that are at the heart of the character development of figures like Jon Snow. Likewise, positions like "*Hand of the King*" or "*Lord Commander*" are based on actual political titles but are recontextualised in Martin's world to take on specific dramatic purposes. They represent authority, loyalty, and moral conflict, and tend to be central points for power conflicts and ethical challenges. By giving such neologisms narrative gravitas, Martin not only builds a densely realised world but also employs language as an instrument to enhance character motive, probe socio-political issues, and propel the narrative.

4.11 Reader Comprehension and Immersion

The use of conceptual blending in neologisms greatly increases the reader's understanding and engagement with *A Song of Ice and Fire*. By basing the new terms on known real-world items and recombining them with fantastical entities, George R. R. Martin allows readers to subconsciously decipher new words and integrate them into their knowledge of Westeros unproblematically. Cognitive Blending Theory hypothesizes that the reader instinctively projects components of familiar mental space be that ancient monarchies, faith institutions, or chivalric combat onto new fictional concepts developed in the series. Thus, phrases such as "Maester," "Small Council," or "Faith of the Seven" fuse theologically and feudalschematically recognizable cues into in-house meanings recognizable and accessible instantly rather than needing cumbersome exposition. This experiential cognitive process facilitates the reader to follow the intricately involved political systems, mythologies, and cultural hierarchies of the series. The world hence becomes one that is coherent and immersive, even if it is highly invented. Martin's verbal decisions therefore not only make the narrative more richly beautiful but also provide cognitive scaffolding in nature, leading readers through a richly complex fantasy world with clarity and interest.

4.12 Elaboration: Running and Extending the Blend

Elaboration is the third phase in Conceptual Blending Theory, in which the blended concept is mentally developed and probed further than at the time of its initial formulation. After the

mental spaces have been composed and filled out, the mind of the reader starts to "run" the blend. I.e., they conjure up possible situations, consequences, and ramifications of the new concept drawn from the logic of the imaginary world. In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R. R. Martin's neologisms tend to encourage such explication. For example, the word "Warg" does not simply refer to an individual who can command animals. As the narrative unfolds, the idea expands to encompass richer themes of identity, the confusion of human and non-human consciousness, and even political resonance—as characters such as Bran Stark receive insight or authority through their warging.

Likewise, "Dragonglass" is initially an unexplained volcanic substance. Still, narrative explication transmutes it into a climactic magical tool, rewriting the reader's view of past conflicts, the White Walkers, and old prophecy. Elaboration enables extension of meaning past literal application into metaphorical, thematic, even spiritual connotation. In CBT terms, elaboration illustrates how mental blends are not fixed; they develop through narrative use and reader interaction. Martin's prolific world-building invites this mental unfolding, making his coined terms not merely comprehensible but also expansive, rich, and layered within the overall thematic texture of the novels.

4.13 Intertextual and Cultural Resonance

George R. R. Martin's employment of neologisms in *A Song of Ice and Fire* tends to produce intertextual and cultural associations that enrich the reader's understanding of the text. With conceptual blending, Martin draws on common historical, mythological, and literary allusions and infuses invented words with meanings that resonate outside of immediate context. For example, the word "Valyrian" evokes connotations of Latin and Roman grandeur, implying an old and mighty civilization whose fall is echoed in actual histories of empire and fall. Likewise, "The Wall" instantly brings to mind Hadrian's Wall, a well-known Roman wall that represented the edge of empire. Still, in Martin's universe, it becomes a mythic edifice that divides civilization from the unknown, fusing cultural memory and fantasy genre. These resonances allow for cognitive blending by situating the fantastical in familiar historical and mythological contexts, allowing readers to intuitively relate to the story and recognize the meaning of these terms. This reliance on communal cultural memory not only deepens the experiential richness of the world of Westeros but also functions as a clever comment on the circularity of history and the tendency of human beings to construct, defend, and deconstruct.

5. Findings

The structural processes underlying neologisms in *A Game of Thrones* and *A Clash of Kings* are the subject of the initial half of the data analysis. Through the classification of the neologisms into blending, compounding, borrowing, derivation, invention, and semantic shift, the research underscores George R. R. Martin's expertise in constructing a vocabulary that comes across as organic to the fantasy universe of Westeros. Hybrid words such as *dragonglass* and *ironborn* combine actual words to create multileveled cultural or symbolic connotations. Compounds like Kingsguard and Night's Watch help ground new institutions in recognisable sociopolitical structures. Lendings from languages like Old Norse and Latin add historical depth to names and titles. At the same time, derivations (e.g., wildling, greenseer) and semantic extensions (e.g., hand, crow) reflect Martin's skill at reusing linguistic material into significant narrative functions. These techniques illustrate how fictional words acquire validity and functionality in an imagined world.

The second half of the analysis applies these neologisms within the framework of Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), which analyzes how the mind combines inputs from two or more mental spaces in order to create new meaning. Input spaces in Martin's novels are made up of actual-world historical and cultural information on the one hand, and the created world of Westeros and Essos on the other. The juxtaposition of the spaces enables the formation of new

yet familiar terms in this case, such as “*master*”, “*weirwood*”, or “*Kingsguard*” that appeal to cognition but in a way recognisable to the reader through the access of familiar patterns of hierarchy, religion, or nature. The generic space provides a structural overlap between them (e.g., both input spaces feature concepts involving governance or myth), and the blended space provides emergent concepts peculiar to the fantasy world. By this model, readers perform unconscious acts of meaning-making that assist them in interpreting and navigating the fictional world with intuitive comprehension.

A key element of CBT, elaboration, is an important factor in how neologisms expand their meaning in the narrative. After a blend is created, the reader cognitively explores its implications, making deeper associations from the original concept. Martin's term Warg, for instance, goes from mere magical power to a metaphysical inquiry into consciousness, identity, and agency. In the same vein, dragonglass develops from a little-known mineral to a mythically charged weapon, rewriting our concept of prophecy, history, and war. These elaborative developments illustrate how neologisms are dynamic vocabulary devices, not fixed labels, which develop in the course of telling. They engage in character creation, plot development, and thematic stratification, taking the reader through an internally consistent and symbolically dense world.

Lastly, the research discovers that Martin's neologisms underpinned by CBT's processes are significantly responsible for reader immersion and interpretive engagement. Terms such as Valyrian and The Wall resonate outside the text, evoking intertextual links with Roman civilisation and historical frontiers like Hadrian's Wall. Embedding cultural memory into fictional terms enables readers to anchor their comprehension of the fantastical in the familiar. Conceptual blending makes this possible by allowing readers to transfer real-world knowledge onto fictional constructs without overt exposition. Consequently, the invented terms serve as linguistic innovation and cognitive anchors, supporting the credibility and immersive nature of Martin's narrative world. The neologisms thus serve as narrative tools and intellectual bridges, merging imagination with history, and fiction with shared cultural awareness.

6. Conclusion

This research has explored the linguistic originality of George R. R. Martin in *A Song of Ice and Fire* using the framework of Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT), conducting a cognitive and structural analysis of *A Game of Thrones*' and *A Clash of Kings*' neologisms. By recognizing the major processes of word formation blending, compounding, borrowing, derivation, semantic shift, and invention—the study has illustrated how Martin builds a vocabulary that is functional in the story and representative of a highly absorptive world. These lexical tactics not only contribute to realism and cultural consistency in the fictional world but also address the reader's intellectual capacities through interpretation and integration processes. Using CBT has enabled the research to move beyond the superficial linguistic characteristics, unearthing how Martin's neologisms are produced by blending input spaces from the real world and the fictional world. The emergent concepts, being found in generic and blended spaces, produce emergent meaning that enriches character buildup, thematic richness, and the social and cultural fabric of Westeros and Essos. Neologisms like Kingsguard, Dragonglass, Warg, and Maester are the best examples of how fantasy fiction can use language as an effective cognitive and narrative tool.

Additionally, the research indicates how these created words develop by elaboration—going beyond their original usage to include more general symbolic and thematic roles. This dynamic feature enables readers to be actively engaged in meaning-making, promoting increased immersion and interpretive involvement. The combination of recognizable cultural references and fantastical elements also points to the intertextual and mythological density of Martin's writing, grounding the unknown within the familiar.

Finally, this study confirms that neologisms in fantasy books are not stylistic flourishes but necessary aids to world-building, cognitive engagement, and depth of narrative. Through the Conceptual Blending Theory framework, the analysis has shown how language acts as a bridge between reality and imagination, inviting readers into a plausible but extraordinary world. This methodology provides insightful findings not just for literary linguistics but also for prospective research at the crossroads of language, cognition, and science fiction.

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