



A Study on Conceptual Metaphors in Business Advertising*

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ABSTRACT

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From a cognitive linguistic perspective (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), metaphor is no longer considered merely a rhetorical phenomenon but rather a fundamental aspect of human thought. This perspective has become a central topic in linguistics, cognitive science, psychology, and various other fields of study. With the evolution of cognitive linguistics, the use of metaphor in advertising gained momentum in the late 20th century and continued to flourish in the 21st century. Advertisers employ metaphors to capture consumers' attention, establish connections between products and concepts, clarify the utility and superiority of products, and ultimately influence consumer behavior. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to enhance our comprehension of the nature and expression of metaphors by analyzing conceptual metaphors in business advertisements. The study aims to explore how conceptual metaphors, specifically ontological metaphors, structural metaphors, and orientational metaphors, are effectively utilized in advertisements. The study also discusses why conceptual metaphors are effective in advertising by focusing on their novelty, simplicity, meaning creation, and emotional empathy. It found that advertisements become more novel, straightforward, meaningful, and emotionally engaging when they use conceptual metaphors as cognitive tools to enhance the interpretation of advertising messages. In conclusion, conceptual metaphors play an important role in marketing advertising. Conceptual metaphors allow consumers to form an active perception of a product or service and feel positive emotions about it. These emotions have a great influence on the consumer's buying behavior.

KEYWORDS

conceptual metaphor, business advertising, novelty, simplicity, meaning creativity, emotional empathy

1. Introduction

One of the Chevrolet truck advertisements that once enjoyed immense popularity in the United States featured the slogan “Chevy Trucks: Like a Rock”. This slogan was used in Chevrolet truck advertisements from 1991 to 2004, making it one of the longest-running ad campaigns in history (Kimbrough 2015). Through this advertisement, Chevrolet successfully instilled a strong perception of their brand, aiming to convey the metaphor that Chevrolet trucks are as solid and reliable as a rock. Similarly, one of Rolls-Royce’s most successful advertisements featured the slogan, “At 60 miles an hour, the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock”. It is reported that after this advertisement, Rolls-Royce’s sales in 1958 increased by 50% compared to 1957¹.

What are the commonalities between these two marketing slogans? Both were highly successful advertisements and used metaphors. For instance, if the Rolls-Royce ad had used a plain phrase like “This new Rolls-Royce car is very quiet”, no one would have paid much attention. They use the technique of metaphor, explaining an object or idea by comparing it to something entirely different.

Throughout different eras, marketers and advertisers have leveraged the power of metaphor to promote products and services. Few devices can explain the benefits of a product to customers as clearly as a metaphor. For example, in wine advertisements, one could use factual language such as “This wine has a pleasant aroma and a tart taste” to describe the flavor of the wine. However, one could also use a metaphor like, “A sip of this wine brings the essence of the sun-kissed hills of Provence to your lips”. Which one would appeal more to customers? Undoubtedly, the latter.

According to numerous studies (McQuarrie and Mick 1993, Hatzithomas et al. 2021), advertising metaphors, especially in business or commercial advertising, are widely recognized as prime examples by consumer researchers. In the recent global market, most companies find that directly promoting product characteristics or functions fails to attract consumers and does not positively impact sales. Therefore, advertisers and companies strive to create attractive and interesting advertisements to capture consumer attention and drive sales. The use of metaphors in business advertising is suggested as a method for creating such engaging and compelling advertisements. For example, Morgan and Reichert (1999), and Phillips and McQuarrie (2002) pointed out that using metaphorical expressions in advertisements not only helps consumers better understand the overall message but also stimulates curiosity, leading to consumption.

From the cognitive linguistic perspective (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987), metaphors are no longer considered merely rhetorical phenomena. Instead, they are seen as a way of thinking that helps people understand the world, becoming a central topic in linguistics, cognitive science, philosophy, psychology, education, and other fields. With the development of cognitive linguistics, the use of metaphors in advertising began to gain attention at the end of the 20th century and became even more popular in the 21st century. Advertisers use metaphors to capture consumer interest, evoke imagery, infer connections between products and concepts, explain the utility and superiority of products, and influence consumers in various ways.

The purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of conceptual metaphors in business advertising, enhancing the understanding of the nature and expression of metaphors. It aims to examine how conceptual metaphors - namely ontological metaphors, structural metaphors, and orientational metaphors - are effectively used in advertising. Additionally, the study seeks to explore why conceptual metaphors are effective in business

¹ This advertisement was written by David Ogilvy, known as the father of modern advertising. Ogilvy himself regarded this advertisement as the best copy he ever wrote (Anand 2021).

advertising by examining their roles in bringing novelty, simplifying complex ideas, fostering creative meaning, and enhancing emotional empathy.

2. Metaphor and Advertising

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor

The term “metaphor” comes from the Greek words “meta” (meaning “over”) and “pherein” (meaning “to carry”), traditionally defined as a comparison between two different entities. Aristotle, in “Poetics”, described metaphor as a way to make the unfamiliar familiar by comparing similar things. During his time, metaphor was primarily discussed in rhetorical or poetic contexts, emphasizing its role in enhancing language and artistic expression.

However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980), along with later works by Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987), revolutionized the understanding of metaphor by arguing that its function extends far beyond rhetoric. They proposed that metaphor is not merely a linguistic or poetic tool but a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which we perceive, think, and interact with the world. In this view, metaphor shapes our everyday language and, more significantly, influences our thoughts, actions, and decisions. Research by Geary (2011) further demonstrated that metaphors are so pervasive in daily conversation that we use one every 10 to 25 words, which equates to approximately six metaphors per minute. These metaphors are so deeply embedded in our language and thought processes that they often go unnoticed. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasized that metaphor is not just a figure of speech but an extension of how we think, forming the foundation of our conceptual system. They argued that many abstract ideas, including complex ones, are understood through metaphorical structures based on more concrete experiences. This insight led to the development of what is now known as conceptual metaphor theory, which posits that our ordinary conceptual system - how we think and act - is largely metaphorical in nature.

Building on this, Lakoff’s later work (1993) significantly expanded the theoretical framework by detailing the cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphor. In this theory, metaphor involves a systematic mapping from a concrete, sensory-based source domain to an abstract target domain. This cognitive mapping allows us to transfer the structure and attributes of the source domain onto the target domain, making abstract concepts easier to understand. For instance, the conceptual metaphor [LIFE IS A JOURNEY] shapes our understanding of life by drawing parallels to the experience of a journey: we plan our lives like charting a course, set goals as destinations, and view challenges as roadblocks. This metaphor helps us grasp the abstract idea of life by associating it with a more concrete experience.

Incorporating Lakoff’s (1993) insights would strengthen the theoretical foundation by deepening the analysis of how conceptual metaphors influence thought, language, and behavior. This perspective offers a more comprehensive view of metaphors as cognitive tools that go beyond linguistic comparisons, emphasizing their crucial role in shaping cognition and communication.

2.2 Advertising

Advertising is a key part of modern marketing strategies, serving as a dynamic communication tool to promote products, services, brands, or ideas to consumers through diverse media channels. Beyond merely presenting persuasive commercial messages aimed at driving purchases, advertising also functions as a medium for conveying sociocultural narratives, facilitating consumer understanding of products, services, and their sponsors. Moreover,

advertisements show what is normal, how people behave, and what values they hold in a community. They also help create and influence culture. In other words, advertising both reflects and helps shape the way culture develops.

In our contemporary society, we are constantly exposed to creative and diverse forms of advertising in our daily lives. The widespread growth of advertising has greatly increased over the years, with statistics showing a significant rise in the number of advertisements encountered by individuals. For instance, Americans in the 1970s encountered between 500 and 1,600 advertisements per day, predominantly through traditional mediums like billboards, newspapers, and television. However, with the advent of digital marketing, this number surged to up to 5,000 advertisements daily by 2007, and by 2021, individuals were exposed to an astonishing range of 6,000 to 10,000 advertisements daily (Jula and Jula 2022). Despite this flood of advertisements, many people remain unaware of the volume of advertisements they encounter. Today, advertisements are everywhere, appearing on all kinds of media platforms. We can find them in many forms, such as ads on TV and radio, in newspapers, magazines, and posters, on buses and subways, and on mobile devices through videos, app ads, and search ads. Online ads also show up as stories, emails, newsletters, product announcements, customer reviews, and sales notifications.

One of the early studies on advertising was by Leech (1966), and since then, there have been numerous studies from various perspectives. Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) associated the structure and function of advertisements from a sociolinguistic perspective. These studies analyzed advertisements in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, discussing the characteristics and persuasive functions of advertisements. However, contemporary research has witnessed a paradigm shift towards cognitive perspectives, emphasizing the role of consumer psychology and visual rhetoric in advertising. For instance, Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) introduced a new framework for analyzing visual rhetoric in advertising, examining the impact of rich visual features on consumer beliefs and attitudes.

The effective use of language in advertising is crucial to its success. The main objective of advertising is to capture consumers' attention and persuade them to make purchases. As such, advertisers must employ language that connects with consumers, evokes emotions, and remains memorable over time. Unlike other forms of communication like politics, journalism, literature, or science, advertising language is customized specifically to boost sales and grab consumer attention in a competitive market. Advertisers use language tricks such as memorable slogans, convincing appeals, and interesting stories to get consumers interested and loyal to their brand. Additionally, in the digital age, advertisers face new challenges and opportunities with online ads. They need to deal with privacy concerns, and create personalized, interactive content to keep consumers interested and engaged.

In conclusion, advertising is very important in today's world because it both reflects and influences what people value and believe. It shows us what is considered important in our society and helps shape those values. When researchers and marketing professionals carefully study how ads use language, what methods they use, and what effects they have, they can understand better how advertising impacts our culture and society. Additionally, as advertising continues to change with new technology and global connections, it is crucial to keep up with these changes. This helps businesses and communicators effectively manage their marketing and communication strategies in a world that is becoming more digital and interconnected.

2.3 Metaphor in Advertising

In today's world, we are all exposed to more than 5,000 advertisements every day. This huge number of ads makes it hard for any one ad to stand out. Because of this, advertisers need to come up with new and creative ways to catch our attention. They must also find ways to keep us interested in their messages. Using fresh and clever ideas helps ads be more noticeable and memorable. One such powerful strategy is the use of metaphors in

advertising. Morgan and Reichert (1999) emphasized the profound impact of metaphorical advertising by likening metaphors and analogies to “the ants of advertising”, a metaphorical comparison that emphasizes their efficiency. Just as ants are able to carry many times their own body weight, a single well-crafted metaphor can convey complex ideas and messages far more effectively than a lengthy description, thereby illustrating the crucial role metaphors play in advertising.

Over time, the application of metaphors in advertisements has seen a substantial increase. Research conducted by Phillips and McQuarrie (2002) reveals that the use of metaphorical ads grew from 13% to 20.1% between 1975 and 1999. By 2014, this percentage had surged to an impressive 64% and approximately 75% of print advertisement headlines were found to incorporate at least one metaphor (Kim et al. 2012). This growing trend shows that advertisers are starting to see how well metaphors work to make their messages more noticeable.

Metaphorical advertising is a critical aspect of persuasive communication, which is fundamentally aimed at selling products to consumers. To achieve this, advertisers must highlight the unique advantages of their products and ignite a desire to purchase them, ultimately driving sales. To create advertising slogans that are both fresh and impactful, advertisers employ various rhetorical tools, including metaphors. These metaphors are invaluable because they possess several rhetorical strengths. They not only capture attention but also help in forming vivid mental images, which can influence consumers’ beliefs and attitudes toward a product. By evoking positive emotions and making the advertising message more memorable, metaphors play a significant role in crafting successful advertising campaigns.

Indeed, Kövecses (2010, p. 65) highlights the importance of metaphors in advertising as follows.

- (1) Part of the selling power of an advertisement depends on how well-chosen the conceptual metaphor is that the picture and the words used in the advertisement attempt to evoke in people. An appropriately selected metaphor may work wonders in promoting the sale of an item.

Using conceptual metaphors in advertising can greatly affect how much consumers are willing to spend, showing just how important metaphors are in boosting sales.

In addition to these insights, substantial research has explored how metaphors function in advertising beyond just verbal expressions. Forceville (1996) investigated how metaphors are also visually represented in ads. For example, Colgate-Palmolive uses imagery of bright pearls to suggest that their toothpaste makes teeth shine like pearls, demonstrating how visual metaphors can effectively communicate product benefits. Zaltman (2003) examined how metaphors can be used to access the deeper motivations of consumers. He developed tools to assist businesses in offering genuine value to their customers, highlighting the potent influence of metaphors in understanding and affecting consumer behavior. By encouraging customers to use metaphors when discussing products or services, marketers can access deeper emotional responses and thoughts, thereby shaping consumer perceptions and influencing their purchasing decisions. Metaphors, therefore, play a crucial role in capturing consumer attention, shaping their views, aiding their understanding of experiences, and ultimately affecting their actions and choices.

3. Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in Advertising

Conceptual metaphors are divided into three types based on their functions: ontological, structural, and orientational metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Ontological metaphors treat abstract ideas as concrete objects

or entities, making complex concepts easier to understand. Structural metaphors use one concept to structure another, providing a framework for interpreting experiences. Orientational metaphors use spatial terms to convey abstract ideas, such as improvement or decline. This chapter will analyze how each type of metaphor is used in advertisements to enhance communication and impact consumer perceptions.

3.1 Ontological Metaphors

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), ontological metaphors involve understanding and expressing abstract concepts in terms of concrete or physical objects. Humans live in a physical world, and the experiences we gain from our surroundings provide a physical basis for understanding abstract concepts. We comprehend abstract ideas through physical entities that we can see and touch. In ontological metaphors, we treat abstract things like thoughts, emotions, and psychological activities as if they were concrete objects.

Consider the abstract concept of “inflation”. By describing inflation as a concrete entity, we can better grasp the idea of rising prices. For instance, advertisements might personify inflation to illustrate its impact on everyday life, making the concept more relatable and understandable to consumers.

- (2) a. *Inflation has robbed* us of our savings.
- b. *Inflation is lowering* our standard of living.
- c. We need to *combat inflation*.

In (2), the abstract concept of inflation is considered as a concrete object possessing physical force. In (2a), inflation is depicted as stealing our savings; in (2b), as lowering our standard of living; and in (2c), as something we need to fight against.

Ontological metaphors are widely used in English advertisements as well, especially those that employ metaphorical expressions using humans as the source domain. Applying human characteristics to non-human entities is a common practice in English advertising. Our understanding of difficult, non-human concepts is often based on our understanding of human traits and activities. Sometimes, specific products or services from organizations like banks are compared to human activities (The Financial Brand 2024).

- (3) a. To save and invest, *talk to Natwest*. (Natwest bank)
- b. Come and *talk to the listening bank*. (Midland bank)
- c. *Talk to Chuck*. (Charles Schwab)
- d. *The Citi Never Sleeps*, But Your Neighborhood May Be Put To Rest. (Citibank)

The passage explains how financial advertisements use ontological metaphors to personify banks, making abstract services more relatable. Through the conceptual metaphor [BANKS ARE PEOPLE], ads portray banks with human qualities like talking, listening, and staying awake, making them seem approachable and trustworthy (Kövecses 2005). For example, Natwest and Midland Banks encourage customers to “talk” to them, presenting the banks as communicative and responsive. This suggests they are engaged and attentive to customer needs, much like a helpful person offering advice. Charles Schwab’s slogan, “Talk to Chuck”, creates an informal, personal connection by using a casual name, implying that the bank is like a trustworthy friend, reinforcing familiarity and trust. Citibank’s slogan, “The Citi Never Sleeps”, emphasizes its constant availability, personifying the bank as always awake and alert. This conveys the message of continuous service and reliability, contrasting with a

“sleeping” bank, which could imply poor service.

Overall, these metaphors transform banks from impersonal institutions into human-like entities, making them more relatable, dependable, and customer-oriented. By using familiar human experiences, these metaphors simplify complex banking services, aligning with Lakoff’s theory that metaphors help people understand abstract concepts through relatable experiences².

Personification, an ontological metaphor, gives human traits to inanimate objects. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe it as a natural way to express thoughts, often seen in advertising. Personification evokes positive emotions and boosts brand appeal by making brands feel more relatable and lively. Consumers are drawn to this technique due to their tendency to attribute human qualities to objects (Delbaere et al. 2011). Brands that use personification create stronger emotional connections, in contrast to those that don’t, which may feel less engaging (Aggarwal and McGill 2007).

Let’s examine examples of personification metaphors used in advertisements.

- (4) a. But how do you get it all clean. Easy. Instead of one, just pop a couple of Ariel Liquitabs in the drum. ...
Ariel Liquitabs *tackle* stains with so much energy they clean even the largest load. (Knowles and Moon 2006, p. 110)
- b. Through the applying of the eye-moisturizer, *the traces of time are gently petted out*. (Shuo and Zuanyi 2020, p. 62)
- c. The Snack that *Smiles back!* (O’Hara 2023)
- d. In the land of Burgers, *Whopper is king*. (Burger King advertising 2024)

Knowles and Moon (2006) present an advertisement for laundry detergent featured in the women’s magazine Red, incorporating personification as one of its sales strategies. The advertisements in (4) demonstrate the effective use of personification to enhance consumer engagement and brand appeal. In (4a), the Ariel Liquitab detergent ad personifies the product as a helpful friend tackling laundry tasks effortlessly. By suggesting that Ariel can handle the hardest jobs, it alleviates the burden from young, professional female consumers, portraying the detergent as a reliable ally in their daily routines. In (4b), the eye moisturizer is described as “gently petted out”, using personification to evoke a sense of softness and care. This metaphor suggests that the product not only reduces signs of aging but does so in a nurturing manner, appealing to consumers looking for gentle skincare solutions. In (4c), Goldfish snacks are personified with the ability to “smile back”, creating an interactive and joyful image that appeals to families and children. This characterization transforms the snack into a source of companionship, emphasizing its fun and friendly nature. Finally, in (4d), the Whopper is portrayed as a king within the “land of Burgers”, elevating its status above other burgers. This personification positions Burger King as a royal authority in the fast-food realm, appealing to consumers’ desires for quality and superiority in their food choices. Overall, these advertisements utilize personification to forge stronger emotional connections and make the products more relatable and appealing.

In each of these advertisements, personification metaphors are used to give human characteristics or qualities to products, making them seem more relatable, dynamic, or superior. This technique helps advertisers create

² The examples in (3) also illustrate the metonymy [INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE], as discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), where banks symbolize the people within them. Slogans like “Natwest, the listening bank” and “Talk to Chuck” emphasize customer service, fostering personal connections. “The Citi Never Sleeps” personifies Citibank, highlighting its commitment to 24-hour service. By humanizing banks, these strategies make them more relatable and approachable, building trust and emotional connections with customers and making financial services feel more accessible.

emotional connections with consumers, making the products more memorable and appealing. By attributing human traits to inanimate objects, the ads suggest that these products are not just items to be used but entities with personality and presence, enhancing their attractiveness in the eyes of potential customers.

3.2 Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphor refers to a process where one concept (the target domain) is understood and structured in terms of another, more clearly defined and concrete concept (the source domain). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), structural metaphors allow us to comprehend abstract notions like “life”, “love”, “debate”, “ideas”, and “time” by projecting these onto concrete and familiar experiences such as “journey”, “war”, “building”, and “money”. In this way, the conceptual metaphor [LIFE IS A JOURNEY] provides insight into how we metaphorically interpret the complexities of life through the notion of a journey.

Consider the following examples.

- (5) a. It's been a *long, bumpy road*.
- b. We stand *at the crossroads*.
- c. He *went through* life with a good heart.

These expressions show how the abstract concept of “life” is mapped onto the concrete concept of “journey”. In example (5a), the phrase “long, bumpy road” equates the challenges encountered during a journey to life’s difficulties, emphasizing life’s hardships. In (5b), “crossroads” is used to signify crucial life decisions, mapping moments of uncertainty or change onto the image of reaching a fork in the road. In (5c), the metaphor equates navigating life with being on a journey, where moral and emotional qualities - such as having a “good heart” - guide the traveler through life’s challenges.

This projection of one concept onto another through structural metaphor involves specific ontological correspondences (the way entities and their relationships in the source domain are mapped onto the target domain) and epistemic correspondences (how knowledge about the source domain informs understanding of the target domain) (Lakoff 1993). For instance, in [LIFE IS A JOURNEY], the road, obstacles, decisions, and goals from the journey domain map onto corresponding life elements such as life’s course, challenges, choices, and personal aspirations.

The structural metaphor [SKINCARE IS A WAR] is frequently employed in cosmetics advertising, where skincare is conceptualized in terms of a military campaign (Kövecses 2005). In this metaphor, the target domain is skincare, a process of managing and maintaining skin health and appearance, while the source domain is war, a familiar concept associated with conflict, strategy, and defense. By using war as the source domain, the metaphor frames skincare as an active, strategic endeavor, portraying the individual as engaged in a constant battle against threats to their skin’s well-being, such as aging, wrinkles, and other imperfections.

The following examples from cosmetic advertisements illustrate this metaphor in action (Biotherm 2023).

- (6) a. *Fight* wrinkles with our skin care products.
- b. Protect your skin and *fight* the signs of aging.
- c. *Defeat* the shine.
- d. To *combat* such blemishes, Biotherm Homme has concentrated its expertise into a line of targeted ultra-effective skin care products

- e. Wrinkles are the greatest *enemy*.
- f. A secret *weapon* to restore baby skin

The metaphoric framing of skincare as a war significantly influences how consumers perceive and engage with skincare products. In advertisements like (6a), which encourages consumers to “Fight wrinkles with our skin care products”, wrinkles are depicted not as mere cosmetic issues but as active adversaries to be defeated. This suggests that using skincare products is akin to taking up arms against an enemy, where consumers must prepare for battle against the signs of aging. Similarly, (6b) reinforces this concept by urging consumers to “Protect your skin and fight the signs of aging”, positioning aging as a threatening force. The metaphor implies that a skincare routine serves as a defensive strategy, akin to fortifying territory in military terms. This perspective frames skincare as an active struggle rather than a passive self-care routine. The militaristic language continues in (6c) and (6d), where phrases like “Defeat the shine” and “combat such blemishes” portray skincare as a series of tactical maneuvers. Here, shine and blemishes are conceptualized as targets that must be eliminated, emphasizing the necessity for precision and determination in skincare, similar to military operations. In (6e) and (6f), wrinkles are depicted as the “greatest enemy”, while skincare products are termed “secret weapons”. This language amplifies the urgency of combating aging, suggesting that achieving youthful skin requires advanced tools for victory.

Overall, the metaphor [SKINCARE IS A WAR] transforms skincare into an urgent, strategic endeavor, drawing on military imagery to emphasize action and importance. Words like “fight”, “combat”, and “enemy” elevate skincare routines to goal-oriented activities, promising consumers a sense of control and empowerment in their pursuit of beauty. This approach resonates with a broader cultural narrative that values resilience and strategy, making skincare not just a routine but an active confrontation against the challenges of aging.

Another significant structural metaphor is [FOOD IS LIFE], which is used in advertising campaigns, such as those promoting the reduction of food waste (Kövecses 2005). In this metaphor, life is the target domain, representing the abstract concept of human existence, vitality, and survival, while food serves as the source domain, representing the more concrete, essential substance required to sustain life.

The following advertisement exemplifies this metaphor.

(7) *food is life*: save food. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2014)

Here, the ontological correspondences involve mapping entities from the food domain onto life³. Food, which sustains physical bodies, maps onto the broader notion of sustaining life itself. The act of consuming food, which

³ In conceptual metaphor theory, metaphorical mapping typically involves the unidirectionality of mapping from the source domain to the target domain (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). However, there are instances where this unidirectionality is violated (Choi 2013, p. 11). The example in (7) above can also be understood in a similar context.

- a. A house is a mother.
- b. A bed is science.
- c. English is life.
- d. A book is a teacher.

These expressions connect concrete target domains such as a “house”, “bed”, “English”, and “book” to more abstract concepts like “mother”, “science”, “life”, and “teacher”, respectively, in order to emphasize their respective characteristics. These metaphors enhance memorability by associating familiar experiences with deeper meanings, making the expressions more impactful.

provides nutrients for survival, corresponds to the broader idea of nurturing and maintaining one's existence. This metaphor simplifies and strengthens the message by suggesting that just as life cannot be maintained without food, wasting food can symbolically equate to wasting life.

The epistemic correspondences are derived from our knowledge of how food functions as a vital necessity for human survival. The understanding that humans cannot survive long without food is projected onto the abstract domain of life, making the message both literal and metaphorical. The metaphor implies that just as food is crucial for maintaining life, reducing food waste is crucial for maintaining and preserving the quality of life. By equating food with life, the advertisement stresses the moral and practical urgency of preventing food waste, urging viewers to see their actions in terms of life-and-death importance.

This [FOOD IS LIFE] metaphor, therefore, transforms an environmental or ethical issue (food waste) into a personal, existential concern, effectively encouraging behavioral change by framing the reduction of food waste as essential to preserving life itself.

3.3 Orientational Metaphor

Orientational metaphors help organize abstract concepts through interactions involving spatial directions like up-down, in-out, and front-back. These metaphors reflect how humans physically and emotionally experience the world. For example, upward spatial orientation is often linked to positive emotions such as joy and happiness, while downward orientation corresponds to negative emotions like sadness and unhappiness. This relationship between spatial orientation and emotional states is evident in common expressions like “feeling up” for happiness and “feeling down” for sadness, illustrating how physical experience shapes our conceptualization of emotions. Therefore, we have metaphorical expressions like the following:

- (8) a. She is in *high* spirits.
- b. Things are looking *up*.
- c. I'm feeling *up* these days.

- (9) a. His spirits were so *low*.
- b. Things are at an all-time *low*.
- c. I'm feeling *down* today.

The examples above illustrate how people metaphorically associate emotional states with spatial orientation. Phrases like “in high spirits” or “things are looking up” use words such as “high” and “up” to represent happiness or positivity, linking these emotions to an elevated, upward direction. On the other hand, phrases like “feeling down” or “spirits were low” use “low” and “down” to express sadness or negativity, associating these emotions with a downward direction. This pattern shows how emotional experiences are framed through bodily experiences and spatial orientation, with positive emotions linked to upward movement and negative emotions to downward movement. These orientational metaphors make abstract emotions more easily understood and expressed.

Car advertisements often use metaphors to create positive associations with their products, as demonstrated by the examples below using the [CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS] metaphor.

- (10) a. America's most advanced assembly plant is *up and running* - Hyundai. (Hyundai)
- b. *Accelerating* the Future (Infiniti)

- c. *Dream up*. (Buick)
- d. Creating a *higher* standard (Cadillac) (Chace 2015)

In (10a), “up and running” uses an orientational metaphor where “up” implies a positive state of activity and efficiency. This suggests that Hyundai’s assembly plant is not only operational but advanced, emphasizing reliability and generating a positive impression. In (10b), “accelerating” reflects movement as progress, with the metaphor suggesting Infiniti is advancing quickly into the future, positioning it as a leader in innovation. The word conveys speed, dynamism, and technological advancement. In (10c), “dream up” merges aspiration and elevation, where “up” symbolizes reaching higher goals. Buick encourages consumers to elevate their lifestyles and aim for their dreams, positioning the brand as creative and forward-thinking. In (10d), “higher” relates to elevation, suggesting superiority and excellence. Cadillac’s claim of creating a “higher standard” places it above competitors, symbolizing unmatched quality and luxury. These metaphors - “up and running”, “accelerating”, “dream up”, and “higher” - highlight progress, aspiration, and superiority, shaping consumer perceptions by linking the brands with positive attributes like success and innovation. This strategic use of metaphors ultimately fosters interest, influencing consumer behavior and driving sales.

Now, let’s examine a skincare advertisement using the same metaphorical system.

- (11) a. Your skin will be radiant like the *peak* of beauty.
- b. *Accelerate* skin repair and renew muscle vitality.
- c. *Straight through* the bottom of the skin. (Artistry™ Skincare, Makeup and Fragrance 2024)

In (11a), the word “peak” employs the upward spatial orientation associated with the [CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS] metaphor to signify the highest state of beauty. This metaphor suggests that the product can elevate one’s beauty to its optimal level, reinforcing the desirability of achieving this “peak” state. In (11b), “accelerate” implies movement that conveys a sense of progress and speed. This metaphor suggests that the product can quickly enhance skin and muscle vitality, aligning with the idea that faster results are preferable. By using this language, the advertisement emphasizes the effectiveness and efficiency of the product in improving one’s appearance. In (11c), the phrase “straight through the bottom” utilizes a downward direction to imply depth and thoroughness. This metaphor indicates that the product penetrates deeply, reaching the core of the skin. By emphasizing this depth, the advertisement suggests that the product offers comprehensive benefits by targeting the underlying issues of skin health.

Overall, these metaphors in both car and skincare advertisements utilize the conceptual metaphor system effectively, creating compelling messages that resonate with consumers’ aspirations and desires.

In the ad of the American company Target⁴, we observe the prominent upward-pointing arrow associated with the phrase “up and up”. This visual cue not only draws on the metaphor [GOOD IS UP], which links upward movement with positive qualities like improvement and quality, but it can also be more effectively understood through the metaphor [MORE IS UP], especially in the context of promoting an increase in the quantity of products like paper and vitamins (Target 2023).

⁴ Target, the seventh-largest U.S. retailer, uses the “up and up” brand for products like notebooks, tissues, and diapers.



Figure 1. [GOOD IS UP] and [MORE IS UP] Advertisement Utilizing the Metaphor by Target

Target’s advertisements use the conceptual metaphors [GOOD IS UP] and [MORE IS UP] to influence consumer perceptions of quality and quantity. These metaphors, rooted in cognitive frameworks, connect upward movement with positive qualities like improvement, growth, and abundance. For example, when promoting products like paper and vitamins, the upward-pointing arrow and phrases like “up and up” signal an increase in both quality and quantity. This spatial orientation aligns with common expressions like “growth is on the rise”, making consumers associate Target’s products with greater value and excellence. By using these metaphors, Target positions its products as superior and plentiful, creating a sense of abundance that appeals to consumer psychology. This not only encourages initial interest but also fosters brand loyalty, as consumers interpret the upward direction as a symbol of improvement and abundance. The use of [GOOD IS UP] and [MORE IS UP] enhances the perception of Target’s products, subtly shaping purchasing decisions and reinforcing the brand’s competitive edge in the marketplace.

4. Why is Conceptual Metaphor Effective in Advertising?

This chapter examines the effectiveness of conceptual metaphors in advertising, which help consumers understand abstract ideas through concrete experiences. Cognitive linguists, such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980), argue that our metaphors stem from sensory experiences in the physical world. For instance, the concept of “warmth” can bridge the physical sensation and the social idea of kindness, illustrating how metaphors operate on multiple levels. Research shows that metaphors significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. For example, Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) demonstrated that different metaphorical frames can shift perceptions; framing crime as a “beast” prompted punitive responses, while describing it as a “virus” favored preventive measures.

Metaphorical advertising appeals to emotions and senses, enhancing brand evaluations and consumer expectations (Morgan and Reichert 1999). Studies indicate that metaphorical ads generate interest and improve attitudes towards brands (McQuarrie and Mick 2003). Furthermore, using mixed emotional metaphors can broaden cognitive frameworks, leading to increased purchase intentions (Septianto et al. 2021). Successful advertisements simplify complex concepts and evoke emotions, making products more relatable and appealing. This chapter delves into how conceptual metaphors contribute to novelty, simplicity, creativity, and emotional empathy in advertising.

4.1 The Effect of Novelty

Novelty in advertising refers to the quality of being new or unusual, which often sparks curiosity and influences consumer behavior. Advertisers employ novel strategies, such as conceptual metaphors, to capture attention and evoke emotions, ultimately driving purchasing decisions. Research indicates that consumers respond positively to new or unexpected information, with novelty playing a crucial role in this behavior (Stell and Paden 1999). Conceptual metaphors go beyond mere linguistic expressions; they reshape our understanding by linking familiar concepts in innovative ways, creating deeper connections between products and ideas.

Defined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphors influence how we think and perceive information. In advertising, these metaphors allow complex ideas to be communicated through relatable terms, enhancing engagement. For instance, describing a bank as “a person who never sleeps” suggests reliability and vigilance. This innovative approach to presenting familiar concepts introduces fresh ideas and memorable associations, making advertisements more effective. When combined with perceived novelty, conceptual metaphors significantly enhance advertising effectiveness by evoking positive responses and fostering emotional connections that drive purchase decisions (Chang and Yen 2013, Li and Guo 2016, Song et al. 2022).

Let’s examine examples of novelty in advertising.

- (12) a. *The Citi Never Sleeps, But Your Neighborhood May Be Put To Rest* (Citibank)
- b. *Happy Banking* (BankWest)
- c. *Where Dreams Get Wings!* (Alliance Community Federal Credit Union)
- d. *The best book in the world - your own passbook* (US Savings Bank)

In these advertisements, conceptual metaphors are employed to create novel associations that resonate with consumers by linking abstract concepts to more tangible experiences. In (12a), Citibank’s slogan “The Citi Never Sleeps” utilizes the conceptual metaphor [ORGANIZATIONS ARE LIVING BEINGS], where Citibank is metaphorically portrayed as a vigilant, always-awake entity (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). This metaphor evokes the idea that the bank is constantly active and alert, providing reliable service around the clock. The novelty lies in how this metaphor reframes the consumer’s understanding of the bank’s operations, shifting from a functional view to one of continuous, almost human-like awareness. Similarly, in (12b), BankWest’s slogan “Happy Banking” relies on the conceptual metaphor [SERVICES ARE EXPERIENCES], where banking is transformed from a mundane task into an enjoyable, emotionally fulfilling experience. By associating banking with happiness, the ad shifts the consumer’s perception from viewing banking as a transactional, emotionless process to one that can bring joy and satisfaction. This metaphor makes the experience of banking more approachable and desirable by connecting it to positive emotions. In (12c), the slogan from Alliance Community Federal Credit Union, “Where Dreams Get Wings”, draws on the metaphor [DREAMS ARE OBJECTS] and extends it with the addition of flight imagery. Here, the conceptual metaphor [ACHIEVEMENTS ARE UPWARD MOVEMENTS] is also at play, suggesting that the credit union can help customers’ dreams take flight, symbolizing progress, growth, and the achievement of aspirations (Lakoff 1993). This metaphor is effective because it invokes the imagery of elevation and freedom, linking the bank’s services to personal advancement and success. Lastly, the slogan in (12d) by US Savings Bank, “The best book in the world - your own passbook”, operates through the conceptual metaphor [DOCUMENTS ARE VALUABLE OBJECTS] (Kövecses 2010). By comparing a passbook to a prized book, this metaphor elevates the typically mundane function of tracking savings to something of deep personal value. The

emotional connection implied by the comparison to a beloved book suggests that the passbook represents something meaningful and satisfying, making the bank's service seem more personal and rewarding.

In summary, each of these advertisements utilizes conceptual metaphors to present their services in fresh, imaginative ways that enhance consumer engagement. By mapping abstract ideas (such as reliability, joy, achievement, and value) onto more concrete, familiar experiences, these metaphors make the ads more relatable and memorable. The novelty and creativity of these metaphors not only capture attention but also forge stronger emotional connections, ultimately influencing consumer behavior.

4.2 The Effect of Simplicity

In a world where individuals are bombarded with over 5,000 advertisements daily, capturing attention becomes increasingly challenging. One essential aspect of effective advertising communication is the ability to present messages concisely and clearly. For instance, Apple has long embraced simplicity as a core principle of its marketing strategy. In 1977, inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's assertion that "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication", Apple co-founder Steve Jobs emphasized that simplicity should prevail over complexity. This philosophy guided the design of the iPod, where Jobs insisted that users should be able to access songs or functions with just three clicks.

Here are examples of advertisements that enhance the impact of simplicity through their slogans:

- (13) a. *A diamond is forever*⁵. (De Beers group)
- b. *Think small*. (Volkswagen)
- c. Budweiser, *The King of Beers* (Budweiser)

The ads of De Beers, Volkswagen, and Budweiser effectively demonstrate how conceptual metaphors enhance advertising impact. In (13a), "A diamond is forever" employs the conceptual metaphor [TIME IS A RESOURCE], linking the durability of a diamond to eternal love and commitment (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). This connection capitalizes on the cultural perception of diamonds as symbols of lasting relationships and permanence. By making the abstract concept of "forever" tangible through the diamond's physical attributes, the ad emotionally resonates with consumers, reinforcing the notion that buying a diamond signifies a long-term investment in love and loyalty. Volkswagen's ad "Think small" (13b) introduces a novel perspective using the conceptual metaphor [SIZE IS SIGNIFICANCE] (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Traditionally, larger vehicles were associated with status, but this slogan redefines smallness as a positive quality, suggesting that compact cars offer unique value and efficiency. By challenging cultural norms and promoting the idea that "small" can be better, Volkswagen shifts consumer preferences, positioning compactness as desirable and innovative. Budweiser's ad "Budweiser, The King of Beers" (13c) employs the conceptual metaphor [POWER IS AUTHORITY], portraying Budweiser as a regal figure in the beer industry (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Kövecses 2010). By equating the brand with royalty, this slogan evokes notions of leadership, tradition, and excellence. The metaphor enhances Budweiser's image of prestige, reinforcing

⁵ Diamonds, symbols of wealth and romance, faced a decline during the 1929 Great Depression. In 1948, De Beers launched the slogan "A diamond is forever", linking diamonds to love and marriage. This campaign increased the percentage of brides receiving diamonds in the U.S. from 10% in 1938 to 80% by the 1990s. Today, nearly 70 years later, this four-word slogan is still celebrated as one of the greatest advertisements of the 20th century (Francis-Tan and Mialon 2015).

its position as a trusted authority in the market. Its simplicity allows consumers to easily associate Budweiser with quality, contributing to its enduring success⁶.

These examples underscore the effectiveness of simple and concise slogans grounded in conceptual metaphors, creating powerful and memorable associations (Li and Guo 2016). As Leech (1983) notes, simplicity reduces cognitive effort for both advertisers and consumers, facilitating clearer communication and faster comprehension. The slogans exemplify the KISS principle⁷, emphasizing straightforwardness and avoiding unnecessary complexity. By focusing on key messages, this principle enhances understanding and effectiveness, making it widely applicable in design, engineering, marketing, and design.

In conclusion, simplicity is a crucial element of advertising effectiveness, especially when combined with conceptual metaphors that resonate with consumers. Clear, metaphorical messages foster strong emotional connections, influence perceptions, and boost brand recognition, ultimately driving consumer engagement and purchasing decisions. These memorable ads showcase how advertisers can effectively convey complex ideas through simple, metaphorical frameworks, leaving a lasting impression on their consumers.

4.3 The Effect of Meaning Creativity

The effectiveness of meaning creativity in advertising is closely tied to the use of conceptual metaphors that enrich the semantic depth of an ad's message. Unlike conventional metaphors used in daily language, those in advertisements are often more imaginative and inventive. This creativity serves to capture attention and address consumer desires, as discussed by scholars such as Ortony (1993). Advertisers, who are typically innovative thinkers, leverage these metaphors as cognitive tools to influence how consumers perceive and conceptualize the product. Conceptual metaphors enable the creation of new meanings and uncover novel connections between otherwise unrelated ideas (Li and Guo 2016).

To illustrate the impact of creative metaphors in advertising, consider the following examples:

⁶ The greatest marketing advertisements are simple and innovative, enabling clear communication of messages. Simplicity attracts attention and enhances memorability, while originality sets ads apart, sparking consumer curiosity and creating lasting impressions. Advertisements that combine these characteristics are key to successful marketing strategies (Cass 2021).

1. De Beers: A Diamond Is Forever (1948)
2. Volkswagen: Think Small (1959)
3. Coca Cola: Buy the World A Coke (1971)
4. Absolut Vodka: The Bottle (1979)
5. Dove: Real Beauty (2013)
6. Apple: Shot on iPhone (2015)
7. Hinge: Designed to Be Deleted (2019)
8. Facebook: We're Never Lost If We Can Find Each Other (2020)
9. Apple: Creativity Goes On (2020)

⁷ The KISS principle, meaning "Keep It Simple, Stupid", emphasizes simplicity in design and communication. It suggests that systems work best when straightforward, avoiding unnecessary complexity. By focusing on key messages, this principle enhances understanding and effectiveness, making it widely applicable in design, engineering, marketing, and software development.

- (14) a. Behind that *healthy smile*, there's a Crest kid. (Crest Toothpaste)
 b. At peacetime, save *a drop of water*; in trouble, *you'll have the Pacific*. (Pacific Insurance)
 c. *It keeps going, and going, and going*. (Energizer)

In (14a), Crest's slogan "Behind that healthy smile, there's a Crest kid" employs the conceptual metaphor [HEALTH IS WELLNESS], where oral health is extended beyond dental care to suggest a broader sense of well-being (Kövecses 2010). The metaphor frames Crest's toothpaste as not only a tool for clean teeth but as a product that supports overall health and happiness. The ad creatively links dental hygiene with positive emotions and self-confidence, thus making the message more engaging and effective. In (14b), Pacific Insurance uses the metaphor [PREPARATION IS A SMALL RESOURCE; AID IS A LARGE RESOURCE] to connect a seemingly insignificant action, such as saving "a drop of water", with substantial benefits during a crisis, represented by "the Pacific" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). This metaphor highlights the importance of small, proactive steps (purchasing insurance) in ensuring financial security in times of need. The contrast between the small "drop" and the vast "Pacific" underscores the value of long-term protection, cleverly reinforcing the insurance company's promise of security. The Energizer ad (14c) emphasizes battery durability through the conceptual metaphor [LONG-LASTING ENERGY IS ENDLESS MOTION]. The phrase "It keeps going, and going, and going" metaphorically represents the relentless performance of Energizer batteries, suggesting their superior longevity. This ad transforms a basic product feature into an engaging narrative about endurance and reliability, a message that resonates with consumers seeking dependable products.

These advertisements effectively utilize conceptual metaphors to create compelling, memorable messages that resonate with consumers. By associating products with relatable, imaginative concepts like energy, protection, and well-being, these ads stand out in a crowded landscape. Advertisers must use creative metaphors to inject fresh meanings into their messages, making them more engaging than routine expressions. Given the vast number of ads encountered by consumers daily, it is essential to use inventive metaphors that grab attention but also leave a lasting impression. As Forceville (1996) and Li and Guo (2016) point out, creativity is crucial in ensuring that advertisements resonate quickly and remain memorable. This creative approach enables brands to distinguish themselves, increasing the likelihood that consumers will notice, recall, and engage with their messages.

4.4 The Effect of Emotional Empathy

Conceptual metaphors are powerful tools in advertising, particularly for eliciting emotional responses. By connecting abstract emotions to concrete, relatable experiences, metaphors make an advertisement's emotional message more resonant and impactful. Advertisers use these metaphors strategically to evoke empathy, drawing on shared human experiences that deeply resonate with consumers.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of emotional empathy through conceptual metaphors, let's examine a few notable advertisements:

- (15) a. *Taste the Feeling*. (Coca-Cola)
 b. There are some things *money can't buy*. For everything else, there's MasterCard. (MasterCard)
 c. *Think Different*. (Apple)

In Coca-Cola's advertisement (15a), the slogan "Taste the Feeling" links the physical experience of drinking soda to positive emotions such as happiness, togetherness, and comfort. The metaphor transforms the act of

drinking into a sensory experience rich with emotional meaning, suggesting that Coca-Cola is not just a beverage, but a catalyst for life's joyous moments. By associating its product with universal feelings of joy and connection, Coca-Cola encourages consumers to view it as a source of emotional fulfillment, aligning the brand with moments of celebration and warmth. MasterCard's slogan (15b), "There are some things money can't buy", uses the metaphor [EMOTIONAL VALUE IS PRICELESS] to emphasize that life's most meaningful experiences - such as love, happiness, and cherished memories - are beyond monetary value (Kövecses 2005). This figurative language connects to the universal truth that life's greatest joys come from moments, not material goods. The advertisement suggests that MasterCard facilitates access to these priceless moments, positioning the brand as a tool for enhancing the emotional richness of life rather than just a financial service. This deep emotional connection encourages consumers to associate MasterCard with the pursuit of fulfillment and shared experiences. Apple's slogan (15c), "Think Different," employs metaphorical language to emphasize the importance of creativity and innovation. The phrase encourages consumers to break away from conventional thinking, with "thinking" serving as a metaphor for unconventional problem-solving and originality. By linking the brand with influential figures like Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison, Apple fosters an emotional connection with individuals who see themselves as creative or innovative. This metaphor elevates Apple beyond a technology company, presenting it as a brand that aligns with the values of self-expression, uniqueness, and challenging the status quo. This emotional appeal strengthens brand loyalty among consumers who feel inspired by Apple's vision of creativity and innovation.

These advertisements illustrate how the strategic use of simple but powerful conceptual metaphors can evoke strong emotions, making the messages more relatable, memorable, and persuasive. By connecting products to universal human experiences and emotions, advertisers foster emotional empathy, elevating their message beyond a focus on features and benefits. This emotional connection not only enhances brand loyalty but also drives consumer behavior, contributing to long-term success in the marketplace.

In this chapter, we have explored the effectiveness of conceptual metaphors in advertising, focusing on how they influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. Metaphors translate abstract ideas into tangible experiences, enhancing both the relatability and memorability of the message. Research shows that metaphorical framing can significantly shape attitudes and decisions, as demonstrated in studies where metaphors manipulate perceptions of crime, among other concepts. Effective advertisements use metaphors to introduce novelty, simplify complex ideas, foster creative meanings, and evoke emotional connections, all of which boost consumer interest and influence purchasing intentions. Overall, metaphors are indispensable tools in advertising, capable of capturing attention, clarifying messages, and forging emotional bonds with consumers.

5. Conclusion

In this study, we examined the use of conceptual metaphors in business advertisements from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Our analysis highlights the importance of metaphors as persuasive tools in advertising discourse. Advertisers strategically use metaphors to capture customer interest, foster positive evaluations of products by linking them to favorable qualities of other entities, and influence customer emotions. Specifically, conceptual metaphors help consumers understand abstract concepts or product functions by mapping actions, ideas, and effects from a familiar source domain to the target domain. This process aids in recognizing new and innovative aspects of the product.

Successful advertisements have the ability to spark interest and draw attention to a product, service, or company

image, and one of the key reasons they can be so effective is their use of metaphors. Metaphors are particularly powerful in business advertising because they offer several benefits from different perspectives. Firstly, from the perspective of novelty, metaphors introduce fresh and imaginative ways of presenting a message, making it stand out and capture the customer's attention in a memorable manner. Secondly, simplicity is achieved through metaphors by turning complex ideas into simple, clear concepts, so consumers can quickly get the main point without needing a lot of explanation. Thirdly, meaning creativity is enhanced by metaphors as they provide innovative ways to convey brand values or product benefits, creating a deeper and more engaging narrative that connects with the customer. Lastly, emotional empathy is significantly strengthened through metaphors, as they draw on universal emotions and experiences, enabling advertisers to connect with consumers on a more personal and emotional level. Thus, by using metaphors, advertisements can effectively engage potential customers and enhance their perception of the brand or product.

In conclusion, conceptual metaphors are crucial in marketing and advertising. They enable consumers to form active and engaged perceptions of products or services and to experience positive emotions toward them. These emotions significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior, making metaphors indispensable for driving consumer engagement and sales. The strategic use of metaphors helps create memorable and significant advertisements that connect with consumers on cognitive and emotional levels.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Tertiary