

Pictorial Metaphors in Food and Beverages Advertising Discourse

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Abstract

Advertisements are ubiquitous in human's daily life and it is impossible not to encounter them. However, they are flicked past by people; therefore, as mentioned by Cook [1], that even though advertising is everywhere, it is actually nowhere. Since the majority of advertisements have the aim of selling products, though indirectly, the advertisements must attract people's attention so that people are willing to spend their time reading or looking at them. For this reason, advertisers use manipulated language with the help of pictures. Through the use of conceptual metaphors, advertisers do not need to say their real purpose of selling the products. The conceptual metaphors in the advertisements usually are found in the verbal texts; yet, "metaphor can occur in pictures, more specifically in printed advertisements and billboards" [2, p1] and usually these pictorial metaphors are more interesting and eye catching than the verbal ones. Thus, this article aims to focus on finding the pictorial metaphors by analyzing both the primary and secondary subjects shown in the pictorial metaphors, through the use of Forceville's [2, 3] theory on pictorial metaphor in advertising; Lakoff and Johnson's [4], and Kövecses' [5] theories on metaphor. Although the discussion focuses on the pictorial metaphors, the verbal texts which are used as the context to uncover the pictorial metaphors will certainly be discussed as well. The study is a qualitative and descriptive one, the source of data were from various online magazines, while the data were advertisements on foods and beverages that contained pictorial metaphors. Hopefully the findings would be useful for other researchers in linguistic field, specifically on metaphors.

Keywords: pictorial metaphors, advertising discourse, advertisements

1. Introduction

Metaphors are very common in people's daily life; whether people realize it or not, they actually have used metaphors to understand something since metaphors are characterized as "understanding and experiencing one kind of things in terms of another" [4, p5] and metaphors are "primarily a matter of thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language" [4, p5]. Since metaphor is a matter of thought, it is logical that it occurs not only in language but also in "static and moving pictures, sounds, music, gestures, even in touch and smell" [3, p463). Metaphors play an important role in advertisements since they are "part of the selling power of an advertisement" [5, p65); it means that to what extent the advertisement could promote the sale of a product, depends on how well the chosen pictures and words used in the metaphors are.

It has been stated previously that metaphors are not only verbal metaphors. They can occur as nonverbal ones as well. Forceville stated that "metaphor can occur in pictures, more specifically in printed advertisements and billboards" [2, p1] and usually these pictorial metaphors are more interesting and eye catching than the verbal ones.

Advertising depends a great deal not only on the texts or slogan but also on *pictorial images*. Therefore, some advertisements have just little linguistic content and rely almost solely on the *image*, although the majority has both elements: linguistic content and image. Since advertising has “a great commercial interest in having its intentions recognized”, it “provides a better corpus for development of a model of pictorial metaphor” [2, p65].

Among the many types of advertisements, the researcher has chosen advertisements on food ingredients, food (including food supplement), and beverages to be analyzed. It is because “advertising for food and beverages communicates potentially powerful food consumption cues, including images of attractive models eating, ..., and positive emotions linked to food consumption” [6]. Besides, people nowadays are alert with what they consume so that they are eager to find more information about food ingredients, food (including food supplement), and beverages. Therefore, they are interested in advertisements, especially the ones on food and drink since by comparing the advertisements on food and drink products, people can gain a great deal of information concerning the healthy food and drink to be consumed. For this reason, the researcher is interested in investigating the types of pictorial metaphors found in food ingredients, food (including food supplement), and beverages advertisements.

Since pictorial metaphors have two terms, namely: target and source domains, this research focuses on finding the subtypes of the pictorial metaphors through the analysis of the primary and source domains shown in the pictorial metaphors.

2. Conceptual Framework

Non-Verbal Metaphor

Metaphor is often associated with verbal metaphor; however, based on [4] cited by [3], metaphors are essential to thinking; thus, it is reasonable that they occur not only in language, but also in static and moving pictures, sounds, music, gestures, even in touch and smell.

Advertising depends a great deal not only on the texts or slogan but also on visual or pictorial metaphors. Therefore, some advertisements have just little linguistic content and rely almost solely on the *image*, although the majority has both elements: linguistic content and image. Since advertising has “a great commercial interest in having its intentions recognized”, it “provides a better corpus for the development of a model of pictorial metaphor” [2, p65].

Pictorial metaphors are monomodal metaphors, that is, the two terms (target and source) in the metaphor are presented in the same mode, i.e. in visual terms [7]. It is similar to the verbal metaphors which have the target and source in language [3]. Pictorial metaphors have the same basic rules as the verbal metaphor, in the sense that these questions need to be asked for pictorial metaphor as well: 1) What are its two domains? 2) What is its target domain and what is its source domain? 3) What feature (structured) cluster of features can or must be mapped from source to target? In pictorial metaphors, although it is clear what entities in an image to be considered as target and source of the metaphor, the entities need to be translated into the conceptual (still verbalized) A IS B format [3].

The types of pictorial metaphor include: *contextual metaphor*, *hybrid metaphor*, and *pictorial simile* [7]. In *contextual metaphor*, one term is described or characterized, the other is not, but unambiguously suggested by the pictorial context. If the pictorial context is removed, the second term disappears and it becomes a non-metaphor. Based on [7], generally, the pictorially present term is, or refers metonymically to, the product advertised.

The other type of pictorial metaphor is *hybrid metaphor*: two objects are normally distinct entities and are physically merged into a single gestalt or two phenomena are presented visually as occupying the same space in such a way that is physically impossible [3].

The next type of pictorial metaphor is *pictorial simile*. It refers to two objects which are represented in their entirety in such a way that they are made to look similar [7, 3]. The similarity can be in form, position, color, lighting, function and so on.

3. Methods

This study was a qualitative study that tended to describe the observed phenomena of written advertisements in the form of words (or as what [8] stated, language in the form of extended text) rather than numbers. The source of data was from various online magazines, while the data were advertisements on foods and beverages that contained pictorial metaphors. The data analysis was based on interpretation. The units of analysis were words in context, including phrases, clauses, sentences and the contextual pictures in the advertisements. The metaphors found in the advertisements were identified and qualitatively described and analyzed, from the point of view of content analysis or textual analysis.

4. Analysis

4.1 *Green Mountain Coffee* Advertisement [11] (see Fig. 1)

In the foreground of *Green Mountain Coffee* Advertisement is a picture of a hand holding a cup of hot coffee, in front of which the verbal text 'Great morning' is written in quite a big font. The background is a panorama of a clean, blue river with a lot of trees on each side of the river. In the far background is a mountain. The vapor from the cup of coffee directs the readers to the verbal text 'good morning' which is written in front of the mountain to give a clue that it is a morning panorama. The vapor also directs the readers to the picture of the mountain itself, to make readers remember that the brand of the advertised product is *Green Mountain Coffee*.

Since the advertised product is coffee, it is clear that the target domain is the coffee, specifically *Green Mountain Coffee*. The picture of the natural scenery in the background and the verbal text gives a contextual clue to the source domain: a beautiful and bright morning, thus, a great morning; therefore, *contextual metaphor* is realized in this advertisement, resulting in the metaphor: A CUP OF COFFEE IS A GREAT MORNING. The features of being fresh, cool, bright, and clear are mapped from the source domain to the target domain, implicates the idea that a cup of *Green Mountain* coffee will make people fresh. The ad slogan '*Brew a better day*' helps the interpretation as well. The word '*brew*' has two meanings: literally, it means 'prepare (beer, tea, etc.) by soaking or boiling grain, leaves, etc.' and figuratively, it means '*bring about, be forming*'. Thus, it can be interpreted that starting your day by drinking a cup of *Green Mountain Coffee* will not only make you fresh, bright, and cool, but also bring about a great morning.

4.2 *Vittoria Coffee* Advertisement [12] (see Fig. 2)

The advertised product in this advertisement is coffee, but the background picture shows a chef (can be detected from the word *Chefs* in the ad slogan) who is holding two handfuls of oysters and is standing in splashing water at the seashore. Only the picture in the foreground shows a cup of coffee and a box of *Vittoria Coffee*. The ad slogan: '*Chefs know fresh is best*' functions as the verbal context for the background picture. Thus, the target domain is the coffee, specifically *Vittoria Coffee* and the source domain is the background picture, resulting in a *contextual metaphor* COFFEE IS FRESH NATURE. The oysters in the chef's hands are just

caught and still alive, so they are still fresh. The freshness of the oysters, the beach and the splashing water are the mappable features from the source domain to the target domain. Since the target domain is specifically *Vittoria Coffee*, the metaphor implicates the idea that drinking *Vittoria Coffee* will make someone fresh. This idea is also supported by the verbal text of the ad slogan: '*Chefs know fresh is best*' and the sentence below the slogan: '*Vittoria Coffee is always fresh on the menu at award winning restaurants*'.

4.3 *Barilla Plus Pasta* Advertisement [13] (see Fig. 3)

The advertised product in this advertisement is packed, multigrain pasta. The advertisement shows a picture of a pair of scales. A pack of *Barilla* is put on one of the scales plates, as if it is to be weighed. However, the weight on the scales which is used to balance the scales is not a normal one and it is rather strange because what is put on the other plate of the scales is a bundle of Swiss chard leaves, some walnuts, and some eggs. The picture that shows unusual scales implies that it is metaphorical since "metaphor violates standard representational practice" [9]. The target domain is the product, namely: *Barilla Plus Pasta*; while the source domain is the pair of scales, resulting in PASTA IS A PAIR OF SCALES metaphor.

The metaphor realized in this advertisement is a *hybrid metaphor*. It is because the target and source domains are normally distinct entities, but they are merged into a single united whole (gestalt); the two phenomena (target and source domains) are visually represented as occupying the same space in a way that is physically impossible [3]. The scales cue the mappable feature of: balance, since the main function of scales is to weigh, and a precise weight is shown by the balance of the left and the right plates of the scales as shown in the advertisement. This implicates the idea that *Barilla Plus* has a healthy balance of nutritious ingredients, namely: Swiss chard leaves, walnuts, and eggs. This idea is supported by 1) the advertisement slogan ('A Healthy balance of nutrient plus taste'), 2) the verbal context at the bottom of the advertisement ('One box of *Barilla Plus* provides the approximate equivalent of the fiber in 35 leaves of Swiss chard, the ALA omega-3 in 6 ounces of walnuts and the protein in 11 eggs') and 3) the visual context (the picture of the ingredients on the left plate of the scales). Besides, the visual context in front of the scales: a knife and a fork on a piece of tissue paper served with a plate of *Barilla Plus* pasta which is ready to eat, creates the image '*PLUS TASTE*' as suggested by the ad slogan.

4.4 *Kool-Aid* Advertisement [14] (see Fig. 4)

This advertisement is for *Kool-Aid* liquid product, featuring the *Kool-Aid* cherry flavor drink product in a person-like glass jar (cherry-bottled man) and a girl. The picture in this advertisement clearly shows that "two objects are represented in their entirety in such a way that they are made to look similar" [3]. The similarities are in color, hair, an activity done by the two objects. Both the advertised product and the girl are in red (though they are not exactly the same red color since the girl's T-shirt is pink). On top of the glass jar, the liquid spurts out of the jar, forming the hair of the jar man, which looks similar to the girl's hair. Besides, both also do the same activity, having a treadmill exercise.

As the target domain of an advertisement is the product itself, *Kool-Aid* becomes the target domain. The source domain is the girl having treadmill exercise who is looking toward the jar man. Since both the target and source domains look similar and do similar activity, the type of pictorial metaphor presented in this advertisement is *pictorial simile*, providing CHERRY

BEVERAGE IS A SPORT GIRL metaphor. The girl's characteristics of being sweet, slim, and energetic are mapped on the target.

Since the brand of the advertised product is *Kool-Aid*, the mapping of the source domain to the target domain, connotes the meaning that by drinking *Kool-Aid*, a person will become as energetic and sweet as the girl and will be able to perform hard work as suggested by the highlighted verbal texts: 'sweet', 'hard', and 'cherry powder' in the headline "IT TAKES WORK TO LOOK THIS SWEET. HARD WORK. AND OF COURSE A STRICT REGIMEN OF CHERRY POWDER". The headline would literally suggest that Cherry *Kool-Aid* is a carefully prepared and delicious beverage since hard work is needed in the process of producing the sweet *Kool-Aid* from the cherry powder. The word 'regimen' has the dictionary meaning: set of rules for diet, exercise, etc. for promoting one's health and physical well-being. Thus it connotes the idea that *Kool-Aid* is a good diet that can promote one's health and physical well-being; therefore, drinking *Kool-Aid* is similar to having a good diet and exercise as suggested by the picture of having a treadmill exercise, yet, the person will still feel cool, since this product helps him/her to feel as well as suggested by the brand name itself *Kool-Aid*.

5. Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is clear that metaphors used in the advertisements are not just verbal metaphors, but also non verbal ones. When the pictures seem to tell nothing about the advertised product, these pictures are intentionally created as pictorial metaphors by the advertisers because all the verbal and non verbal advertisement texts should support the advertised product.

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Appendices

Figure 1 [11]



Figure 2 [12]



Figure 3 [13]

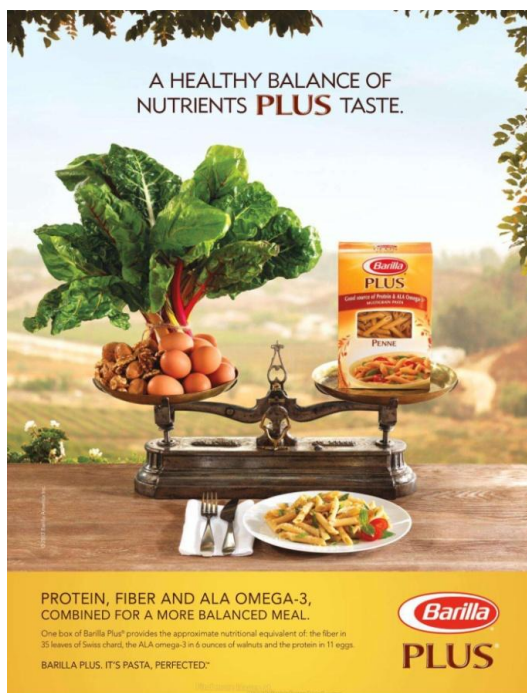


Figure 4: [14]

