

Research Article

A COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF METAPHORS IN ENGLISH CAR ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

English car advertising shows the frequent use of metaphors as structuring tools of advertisements. Based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the study investigates the cognitive function of metaphors in order to understand how they are skilfully used by advertisers to change consumers' perception and persuade them to buy the product. It is designed around a corpus of sixty-one car advertisements and the content analysis of forty-six of them. The focus of the analysis is on the description and the cognitive processes used to persuade potential consumers. The results show that metaphors help to shift consumers' attention towards the source domain and to create a new way of perceiving the car by mapping it to entities, activities or phenomena that carry some stimulating positive feature.

Keywords: Advertising, car, consumers, conceptual, domain, English, metaphor.

INTRODUCTION

The observation of sixty-one car advertising messages published on the internet shows that metaphors are frequently used in English car advertisements. Metaphor is defined from a Cognitive Linguistics standpoint as a cognitive tool that allows the understanding of a conceptual domain (target domain) in terms of another conceptual domain (source domain). Since metaphor is a tool that operates in human thought, it is only manifested in verbal language through metaphorical expressions (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

As far as car advertising is concerned, the following metaphorical expressions can be given to substantiate the linguistic manifestation of metaphors in this specific genre of discourse:

1. Celebrate the journey of life¹
2. Life is best when driven²
3. Live brilliant³
4. Drive to prosperity⁴

These advertising messages structure around the following metaphors:

5. LIFE IS A JOURNEY
6. LIFE IS A MOVING OBJECT
7. GOOD IS LIGHT
8. PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS

The use of metaphors in car advertisements has drawn the attention of scholars from different theoretical backgrounds. Hence, researchers have shown interest in specific issues such as the

classification of figurative devices and metaphors found in car advertisements (Puspasariandlhash, 2012; Atmaja, 2022; Misdiana *et al.*, 2018), the expression of gender stereotypes through metaphors (Thornborrow, 1998), the influence of culture on metaphor use (Hartati *et al.*, 2021), and the conceptual and contextual operation of metaphors (Zhang and Gao, 2009; Švažienė, 2010). Although these studies have their strengths and limitations, they are all based on the implicit assumption that metaphors do occur in car advertisements as put forward in this study. From a Cognitive Linguistics perspective, the frequent occurrence of metaphors in English car advertisements is an important topic as it raises the issue of their function in this particular type of advertising. Therefore, this study looks for answers to the following questions:

- (i) What kinds of metaphors are used in English car advertisements?
- (ii) How to these metaphors operate in thought to persuade potential consumers?
- (iii) What is the aim of the use of metaphors in English car advertisements?

Based on the above questions, the general objective of the study is to show that the use of metaphors in English car advertisements has a conceptual basis in relation with human experience. Specifically, the study seeks to reach the following objectives:

- (i) To describe the kinds of metaphors that occur in English car advertisements.
- (ii) To explain the cognitive process that allows metaphors to operate as persuasive tools in the thought of potential consumers.
- (iii) To show that metaphor is a mechanism to control human thinking and action.

The study is based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), a theory of linguistics that defines metaphor as a cognitive mechanism whose function is to allow the understanding of one reality (target domain) in terms of another reality (source domain). Metaphor is viewed as an important conceptual tool that interacts both with human thought and action. Applied to linguistic analysis, CMT identifies and characterizes the processes of thought based on the domains, the correspondences between them (mappings), and the experiential basis of the correspondences. This research work is corpus-based.

¹Advertisement released by Toyota in 2012, on <https://news.paktron.net/2012/10/imc-introduces-toyota-avanza-7-seater.html> and accessed on June 15, 2022.

²Advertisement released by FIAT in 2011, on <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/28/business/media/just-asking-about-jlo-chicago-and-manning-up.html> and accessed on June 15, 2022.

³Advertisement released by Hyundai in 2012, on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npamxZgRv5U> and accessed on June 15, 2022.

⁴Advertisement released by Nissan in 2016, on <https://www.piston.my/2016/01/09/nissan-drive-to-prosperity-campaign-launched/> and accessed on June 15, 2022.

The corpus comprises sixty-one car advertisements from different companies, which were gathered from the internet. These advertisements contain both conventional and creative metaphors. For the analysis, two steps are taken. The first step is the identification and description of the metaphors contained in the advertisements. The second step is a description of the cognitive processes on which metaphors are based, which allow advertisers to control the thinking of potential consumers in car advertisements. The study comprises three main parts. The first part defines the theoretical framework. The second part focuses on the characteristics of advertising and advertising language. The last part is the analytical part which analyses metaphors in car advertisements.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is framed in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), a linguistic theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson since the 1980s. CMT is a subfield of Cognitive Linguistics, a research paradigm that has been under development since the 1970s with the works of linguists such as Charles Fillmore (Fillmore, 1976), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987), Ronald Langacker (Langacker, 1987), Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (Fauconnier, 1994; Fauconnier and Turner, 2002) and Leonard Talmy (Talmy, 2000). Conceptual Metaphor Theory started in 1980 with George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). These authors have noticed that everyday linguistic expression is replete with metaphors that influence human thought and action. Their observation led them to the view that the human conceptual system is largely metaphorical. Metaphors organize conceptual system covertly and unconsciously and appear in language through linguistic expressions. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), people use metaphors in every conversation to categorize abstract entities in terms of more concrete elements of life. In other words, human beings think in terms of metaphors even if they are not always aware of doing so. Metaphor is inescapable for human thinking because it allows the structuring of abstract thought based on concrete realities of everyday life. Hence, abstract entities can be understood and reasoned about in terms of more concrete elements. Because metaphors serve for the understanding of abstract entities in terms of concrete ones, they map concrete knowledge onto abstract knowledge. Cognitive linguists refer to the concrete knowledge as the source domain while the abstract knowledge is the target domain. This leads to the definition of metaphor as the mapping of a source domain onto a target domain to allow the understanding of the target domain in terms of the source domain (Kövecses, 2010). The mapping is a set of systematic correspondences between the source domain and the target domain. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have shown that many metaphors occur verbally in conversation. As such, a major part of their work lays emphasis on the verbal manifestation of metaphor in conversation. However, subsequent research has shown that metaphors can also appear in other modes than verbal (Forceville, 1996, 2020). In most instances, though, metaphor expression is multimodal with a combination of verbal and pictorial modes of communications.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADVERTISING AND ADVERTISING LANGUAGE

Characteristics of Advertising

The word 'advertising' originates from the Latin word 'advertere' which means to 'draw one's attention on' (El-Dali, 2019: 96). Advertising is a professional activity that serves to communicate about a product, service, idea, event, or an organization to draw the

attention of the public or to motivate it to embrace that product, service, idea, event, or organization. Advertising is part of mass communication and can be commercial or institutional (El-Dali, 2019). Advertisements can be categorized either from the perspective of the medium or lucrativeness. In terms of medium, there are magazine, audiovisual, billboards, prints, radio or internet advertisements (Cook, 2005). On the lucrative side, advertisements can be commercial and non-commercial (Akinbode, 2012). The goal of advertising is to change the behavior of the potential consumer to embrace the product, service, or idea (Barre & Gayrard-Carrera, 2015). To achieve this goal, the advertisement operates on the consumer at three levels: cognitive, affective, and co native. In other words, it informs consumers, arouse their desire to purchase and finally triggers action from consumers (Barre and Gayrard-Carrera, 2015; Décaudin and Digout, 2011).

Advertising Language

Since the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), *language* in linguistics refers to an ability whose manifestations are *langue* and *parole* (Langacker, 1987). However, language can also refer to a specific linguistic variety of a specialized field that is subject to sociolinguistic and stylistic restrictions (Crystal, 2008). In this sense, one can talk about scientific or advertising language. Advertising language is a persuasive language that makes use of Aristotle's model of persuasion, a triad composed of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. For Aristotle, these three elements are the key aspects of the art of persuasion (Aristotle, trans., 1998). The *logos* aspect of advertising language is the one concerned with logical, rational, and argumentative language using so-called objective elements such as figures, graphs and even percentages (Barre and Gayrard-Carrera, 2015). The logical character of advertising language appears in advertisements where the discourse is explanatory. In this type of advertising, the focus is on the information to be conveyed objectively and the purpose of the advertiser is to make the product known to the consumer. The *pathos* or emotional side of advertising language is the ability to incite potential consumers through emotion and the focus in this case is on consumers (El-Dali, 2019). To achieve this goal, advertisers often adopt a narrative discourse with an event to narrate to arouse empathy. The narrative evolves from a problematic situation to a satisfying final situation promoted by the brand (Barre and Gayrard-Carrera, 2015). At last, *ethos* or ethics is the side of advertising that lays emphasis on constructing a positive image of the product or service. Ethics focuses on the brand for which it aims to create a valuable image among consumers. The advertiser sublimizes the brand through descriptive processes that allow imagination, perception or feeling. Sometimes, to achieve this goal, the advertiser resorts to metaphors with the intention to influence the consumer's perception and sensation (Barre and Gayrard-Carrera, 2015; Johannessen *et al.*, 2010).

IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF METAPHORS IN CAR ADVERTISING

Car is Future

The conceptualization of car as future was found as one of the major metaphors used by car advertisers in English. This is a creative metaphor in which the concept of car is understood based on the concept of future. Therefore, the source domain is the car while the target is the future. This metaphor is active in the following metaphorical expressions:

9. BMWi. Hello future⁵
10. The future is here⁶
11. The future's never looked so good⁷
12. Drive the future⁸
13. A reflection of our future⁹

In traditional theories where metaphor is viewed as a figure of speech, there is no distinction between metaphor and its linguistic manifestation through metaphorical expressions. Hence, metaphorical expressions are referred to as metaphors. An example is "Achilles is a lion" which is considered a metaphor (Aristotle, trans., 1998). However, for Conceptual Metaphor Theory, individual linguistic expressions such as (9) – (13) cannot be referred to as metaphors. They are all structured around a common but covert metaphor that conceptualizes the car as the future. Each metaphorical expression shows a specific aspect of the metaphor:

- In (9), conversation with the future is actually a conversation with the car;
- In (10), the localisation of the future is that of the car
- In (11), the physical appearance of the future is mapped unto that of the car
- In (12), you can drive the future as you would drive a car
- At last, in (13), the reflection of the future actually means the reflection of the car

These metaphorical correspondences can be schematized below through diagram (1):

Source : FUTURE	Mappings	Target: CAR
The localization of the future	—————>	The localization of the car
Conversation with the future	—————>	Conversation with the car
Appearance of the future	—————>	Appearance of the car
Driving the future	—————>	Driving the car
Reflection of the future	—————>	Reflection of the car

Figure 1: Conceptual Mapping of the Domain of Future to the Domain of Car

Car is Animal

Another significant metaphor found in car advertising is obtained through the animalization of the car. This metaphor is linguistically manifested through the following metaphorical expressions:

14. Good looking beast¹⁰
15. Beast of the green hell¹¹
16. Bye-bye black sheep.¹²

⁵Advertisement released by BMW in 2017, on <https://www.retaildive.com/ex/mobilecommercedaily/bmw-encourages-pandora-listeners-to-build-an-i3-model> and accessed on June 15, 2022

⁶Advertisement released by BMW in 2022, on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX2_s-K-gJgand accessed on June 15, 2022

⁷Advertisement released by Audi in 2015, on <http://audialto.com.au/pennant-hills/all-new-audi-q7/> and accessed on June 15, 2022

⁸Advertisement released by Lexus in 2014, on https://www.greencarreports.com/news/1091940_lexus-ad-not-only-sneers-at-plug-ins-but-gets-charging-wrongand accessed on June 15, 2022

⁹Advertisement released by Lexus in 2011, on <https://www.behance.net/gallery/4477993/Lexus-HRC-Adand> accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁰Advertisement released by Mercedes in 2017 on <https://www.ibtimes.co.in/mercedes-benz-gla-45-amg-4matic-launched-india-price-feature-details-612325and> accessed on June 15, 2022

¹¹Advertisement released by Mercedes in 2017, on <https://www.ringtube.de/the-new-amg-ringtaxis-are-real-beasts-of-green-hell-nuerburgring-nordschleife/> and accessed on June 15, 2022

17. 35000 cheetahs on the roads in just one year.¹³
18. The black panda of the family¹⁴
19. Move with more grunt¹⁵

These expressions show how specific aspects of the animal are mapped unto the reality of car. The animal's physical appearance, colour, speed, sound and relation with human beings are conceptualized as the ones of the car. These attributes are transferred from the realm of animal to the domain of car as per the correspondences below:

Source : ANIMAL	Mappings	Target : CAR
Physical aspect of the animal	—————>	Physical aspect of the car
The color of the animal	—————>	The color of the car
The speed of the animal	—————>	The speed of the car
The human-animal relation	—————>	The human-car relation
The sound of the animal	—————>	The sound of the car

Figure 2: Conceptual Mapping of the Domain of Animal to the Domain of Car

Car is Human Being

The personification of the car is another strategy used in many car advertisements whose foundation is the metaphor CAR IS HUMAN BEING. In this case, key aspects of the human nature are selected by advertisers and projected unto the car to shape its perception by potential consumers. Expressions (20) – (26) reveal some intrinsic human traits involved in car advertising and which are linguistic manifestations of the metaphor on which they stand:

20. It thinks before it acts¹⁶
21. A lot of cars make a statement. This one listens.¹⁷
22. You wanted a car you'll love. we built a car that will love you back¹⁸
23. Resting is not part of its vocabulary¹⁹
24. The car that reads the road²⁰
25. The new Honda CR-V; The SUV that automatically reads the terrain it's on²¹
26. It does what no other car can. it talks.²²

¹²Advertisement released by Hyundai in 2007, on <http://www.adeevee.com/2007/11/hyundai-vera-cruz-bye-bye-black-sheep-outdoor/> and accessed on June 15, 2022

¹³Advertisement released by Mahindra in 2012, on <https://mbasic.facebook.com/MahindraXUV500/photos/a.172080652877507/360632764022294/?type=3&p=30> and accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁴Advertisement released by FIAT in 2018, on <https://www.ebid.net/au/for-sale/flat-panda-100hp-original-magazine-advert-1005094-128595352.htm> and accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁵Advertisement released by FIAT in 2015, on <https://www.gil-benjamin.com/work/moregruntand> accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁶Advertisement released by Toyota in 2013, on <https://lakozytoyota.com/print-ads/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁷Advertisement released by Ford in 2008, on <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ifhp971/12201900563> and accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁸Advertisement released by Honda in 2015, on <https://saumitra08.blogspot.com/2012/05/it-loves-you-back.html?l=1> and accessed on June 15, 2022

¹⁹Advertisement released by Mercedes in 2017, on <https://www.advertgallery.com/newspaper/mercedes-benz-gla-car-resting-is-not-part-of-its-vocabulary-ad/> and accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁰Advertisement released by Toyota in 2007, on www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/457256168401766003/ and accessed on June 15, 2022

²¹Advertisement released by Honda in 2006, on www.coloribus.com/adsarchive/prints/honda-cr-v-letters-8121455/ and accessed on June 15, 2022

²²Advertisement released by Mahindra in 2016, on <https://www.autopundit.com/uncategorized/indian-automotive-print-adsand> accessed on June 15, 2022

As can be seen through the above expressions, typical human features are predicated on different types of cars such as the ability to think, to act, to speak, to listen, to love, to read and even to have one's own vocabulary. All these attributes belong to the human nature and not to vehicles. However, their use in those advertisements means that a metaphor is being used to constrain human thinking about the advertised cars. The metaphor is structured around some metaphorical mappings that match aspects of human nature to aspects of the concept of car.

- Human language is mapped to the sound or the performance of the car
- Human thought is matched with the technology applied to the car
- Interpersonal relation is projected to the relation between the car and human being

Car is Power

The CAR IS POWER metaphor has been noticed previously by some researchers especially the study by Thorn borrow (1998) that equates the drive of large cars with a powerful male experience in car advertising. The same metaphor is still used by advertisers as testified by the instances below:

27. The boss returns²³
28. King of the off-road²⁴
29. Supreme luxury, absolute power²⁵
30. Designed for domination²⁶
31. Command the road. and all the attention.²⁷
32. Power nap. Power yoga. Power lunch. How about a power car?²⁸
33. Starting today, 'Power to the people' isn't just a slogan²⁹
34. Feel the power; embrace the style³⁰
35. Power was never so beautiful³¹

Instances (27) - (35) are a perfect illustration of the difference between the traditional and the cognitive views of metaphor. The former, which confuses metaphor with its verbal manifestation, would probably find a distinct metaphor for each metaphorical expression. However, it would only see the outer face and would have difficulty perceiving the more subtle conceptual metaphor that structures all these expressions. This metaphor is signaled by the mapping of different facets of power to the car:

The car is the *boss* and the *king*. It embodies *luxury* and absolute *power*. Designed for *domination*, this machine *commands* both the road and the attention. In many cases, it is the embodiment of *power*.

It is important to note the strong presence of the lexical field of power perceived through the terms *boss*, *king*, *luxury*, *power*, *domination* and *command*. This lexical field illustrates the following metaphorical correspondences (Figure 3).

Source : POWER	Mappings	Target : CAR
The social status	—————>	The type of car
The idea of powerfulness associated with power	—————>	The idea of powerfulness associated with the performance of the car
Social domination	—————>	The ability to overcome obstacles on the road
The ability to command in society	—————>	The capacity to exert control on the road and to draw people's attention
The power to the people	—————>	The power to consumers
The psychological attractiveness of power	—————>	The physical attractiveness of the car

Figure 3: Conceptual Mapping of the Domain of Power to the Domain of Car

Car is Athlete

Sports are not exempt from the source domains used by advertisers to structure the reality of the car in the mind of consumers. Whereas the car is not a purely abstract reality, the use of various domains of experience creates different images and perceptions of the car in the mind of target audiences for persuasive purposes. This section focuses on cases where the car is conceptualized like an athlete. Here are some expressions that illustrate the linguistic manifestation of this metaphor:

36. The best sprinter ever³²
37. Sprinter really stacks up³³
38. Business athlete³⁴

Advertisements (36), (37) and (38) represent the vehicle as a sprinter or as a business athlete. In other words, advertisers want the audience to think of the car's performance in terms of the performance of an athlete. The following metaphorical correspondences are therefore established between the domain of the car and that of the athlete:

- The car's physical condition corresponds to the athlete's physical condition
- The performance of the car is equivalent to the performance of the athlete or the company
- The athlete's reputation is mapped to that of the car.

It is the establishment of these metaphorical correspondences that gives rise to the metaphor whose manifestation is only felt through the linguistic expression of the correspondences.

²³Advertisement released by Ford in 2010 on <https://www.mustangspecs.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2012MustangBossAdvertisementBillboard-main-1.jpg> and accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁴Advertisement released by Ford in 2017, on <https://www.ford.com.au/showroom/future-vehicle/next-gen-everest/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁵Advertisement released by Toyota in 2018, on <https://wheellbhp.com/2018-toyota-innova-crysta/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁶Advertisement released by Nissan in 2016, on <https://www.carwale.com/news/passenger-cars-to-become-expensive-additional-taxes-in-budget-2016-17-131355.html> and accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁷Advertisement released by Nissan in 2016, on <https://www.advertgallery.com/newspaper/nissan-terran0-car-advertisement/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁸Advertisement released by Volkswagen in 2014 on https://www.afags.com/news/story/42650_Volkswagen-Polos-Power-Play and accessed on June 15, 2022

²⁹Advertisement released by Volkswagen in 2014 on <https://www.teambhp.com/forum/indian-car-scene/152903-summary-changes-2014-vw-polo-11.html> and accessed on June 15, 2022

³⁰Advertisement released by Volkswagen in 2017 on <https://www.advertgallery.com/newspaper/volkswagen-car-feel-the-powerembrace-the-style-ad/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

³¹Advertisement released by Hyundai in 2014 on <https://hisarhyundai.com/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

³²Advertisement released by Mercedes in 2018 on <http://www.vanessadecastro.com/portfolio/mercedes-benz-new-sprinter-launch-2/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

³³Advertisement released by Mercedes in 2014 on <http://www.flickdriver.com/photos/aussiefordadverts/23198505233/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

³⁴Advertisement released by BMW in 2017 on <https://www.bmwblog.com/2017/01/19/actor-scott-eastwood-is-the-image-of-the-newbmw-5-series/and> accessed on June 15, 2022

Driving is Playing a Game

It is a well-known fact in Cognitive Linguistics that metaphors are organized in such a way that some metaphors systematically derive from other metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 139) refer to this organization as "metaphorical implication". Like conventional metaphors, creative metaphors adhere to the principle of entailment, as the following statement emphasizes: "Like conventional metaphors, new metaphors have entailments, which may include other metaphors and literal statements as well" (Idem, p.139). The relation of implication evoked by these authors exists between the metaphor "THE CAR IS AN ATHLETE" and the metaphor "DRIVING IS PLAYING A GAME". Indeed, the car can only be conceptualized as an athlete within the cognitive model where driving is perceived as a game. Examples of the DRIVING IS PLAYING A GAME metaphor include the following advertisements:

39. This year, all eyes are on one player³⁵
40. The truck game's most versatile player³⁶
41. Draft pick³⁷
42. A slap shot of confidence³⁸
43. The team that powers forward³⁹
44. See how the game has changed⁴⁰
45. New Nissan nv300 raise your game⁴¹
46. Let's play⁴²

The large number of advertisements featuring the "DRIVING IS PLAYING" metaphor is a clue to its anchoring in English car advertising. Each instance reveals a specific aspect of the correspondences established between the domain of driving and that of gaming:

- The driving maps to the game itself
- The car is the player
- The choice of the car corresponds to the choice of the player
- The performance of the car is the performance of the player
- The car's role in driving is the player's role in the team
- Changes in driving correspond to changes in the game

The above correspondences bring us to the end of the descriptive part of this study. Overall, six metaphors were identified where the concept of car is conceptualized in terms of *future*, *animal*, *human being*, *power*, *athlete* and *game*. For each case, the systematic organization of the metaphor was shown through the different metaphorical correspondences involved in it. Now, in the next part, the focus is on the cognitive processes associated with each metaphor, which are used by advertisers to control the thinking of potential consumers and persuade them about the product.

³⁵Advertisement released by Mercedes in 2016, on <https://mariestrycharz.com/pagenotfound.html> and accessed on June 15, 2022

³⁶Advertisement released by Ford in 2016, on <https://portfolio.adobe.com/missing> and accessed on June 15, 2022

³⁷Advertisement released by Ford in 2015, on <https://portfolio.adobe.com/missing> and accessed on June 15, 2022

³⁸Advertisement released by Ford in 2015, on <https://portfolio.adobe.com/missing> and accessed on June 15, 2022

³⁹Advertisement released by Ford in 2015, on <https://portfolio.adobe.com/missing> and accessed on June 15, 2022

⁴⁰Advertisement released by Toyota in 2008, on <https://theinspirationroom.com/daily/2008/toyota-aurion-v6-game-changers/> and accessed on June 15, 2022

⁴¹Advertisement released by Nissan in 2016, on <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/parking-is-not-an-art> and accessed on June 15, 2022

⁴²Advertisement released by Lexus in 2015, on <https://thenewswheel.com/lexus-super-bowl-ad-features-rc-and-a-real-one/> and accessed on June 15, 2022

COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN ENGLISH CAR ADVERTISING

A variety of strategies are used in car advertisements to control the thinking of the potential consumer. In these advertisements, the image of the car is constructed around specific conceptual areas that have the potential to arouse curiosity or some interest from the target audience. In advertisements (9) - (13), the strategy is to tie any idea of car to that of the future. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the future refers to a period that is yet to come (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). The future is associated with things which have not happened yet and remain unknown. Therefore, people are curious about what the future holds and how their future life will be like. Now, the idea that the car embodies the future is a stimulating one because it tells the potential consumer that there is something about this car that is not yet known and which the consumer must find out. So, curiosity to discover that specific unknown feature of the car is definitely the reason why the potential consumer wants to buy the car. In advertisements (14)-(19) the conceptualization of the car as an animal relies on a strategy that consists in leveraging the relationship between humans and specific kinds of animals and projecting the perception of this relationship onto the car. The animals used have a special relationship with humans or a positively valued characteristic for which they are appreciated in society. The sheep in advertisement (16) is a domesticated animal while the panda is appreciated for its physical appearance. The cheetah in (17) is admired for its speed, while the rhinoceros in (19) is admired for its strength. So, through the use of these animals, advertisers can channel the thinking of potential consumers towards valuable features such as proximity, easy control, physical attractiveness, speed or strength. All are felt like positive features when predicated on cars.



The CAR IS A HUMAN BEING metaphor relies on a strategy which is similar to previous metaphors. It transfers attributes usually associated with human beings and predicates them on the car for persuasive purposes. Intrinsic traits of human nature such as thinking, listening, loving and speaking are all summoned in the advertisements and projected onto different types of vehicles from different manufacturers. The association of these human attributes with the car has the effect of enhancing the image of the car in the minds of potential consumers. The idea that a vehicle can perform actions naturally performed by a human being arouses the curiosity of the potential consumer to try the car. In advertisements (27) - (35), advertisers create a desire to buy the car by shifting consumers' attention to the idea of getting power through purchasing the car. The possession of power is a stimulating idea because human beings have a natural desire to be in power. Indeed, research shows that humans long for power even when there are no benefits to gain, which means that people are naturally attracted towards power. Recently, a study conducted by Pikulina and Tergiman (2020: 41) reveals that "a large fraction of individuals seek power even if it does not grant them more control or autonomy from others". So, with this

metaphor, people are led to think first about the power that they can gain by getting the car and this idea acts like a stimulator that eventually triggers the purchasing act. With the metaphor CAR IS ATHLETE, the consumer's thinking is directed toward the source domain represented by the athlete. The metaphor expresses the desire to transfer any idea about the performance of the athlete towards the car. It also associates any positive perception of sport with the vehicle. As such, an athletic vehicle stands not only as a performance vehicle but also as a vehicle that makes drivers feel like the drive of the car equals the practicing of a sport which, in this case, is athletics. In advertisements (39) - (46), there is a shift of attention from the target domain of car to the source domain of game. Driving is seen as a playful activity through the metaphor "DRIVING IS PLAYING A GAME". These advertisements constrain the thought of potential consumers towards the notion of playing games to incite them to engage in driving. It is an effective strategy if consumers think of games as activities that have a positive impact on their life. That positive impact of games becomes the incentive to buy the car and engage in the activity of driving.

CONCLUSION

This study seeks to uncover the function of metaphors in English car advertising in order to understand how they are skillfully used by advertisers to change consumers' perception and persuade them to buy the product. It first identifies and describes metaphors from different advertisements for different types of cars. Then, it proceeds to analyse the cognitive processes involved in the metaphors and how they shape consumers' view about the advertised car. The analysis shows that advertisers draw on the source domain to create a new way of perceiving the car by mapping it to valued entities, activities or phenomena. Concepts such as *future*, *animal*, *human being*, *power*, *athlete* or *game*, denote realities that are stimulating because of some specific positive feature. The cognitive strategy used by advertisers corresponds to some attention shifting where the focus of consumers shifts from the target domain to the source conceptual domain. Therefore, they can link the car to some positive feature that they are able to perceive about the source domain. That positive feature is the ultimate reason why they can decide to purchase the car.

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